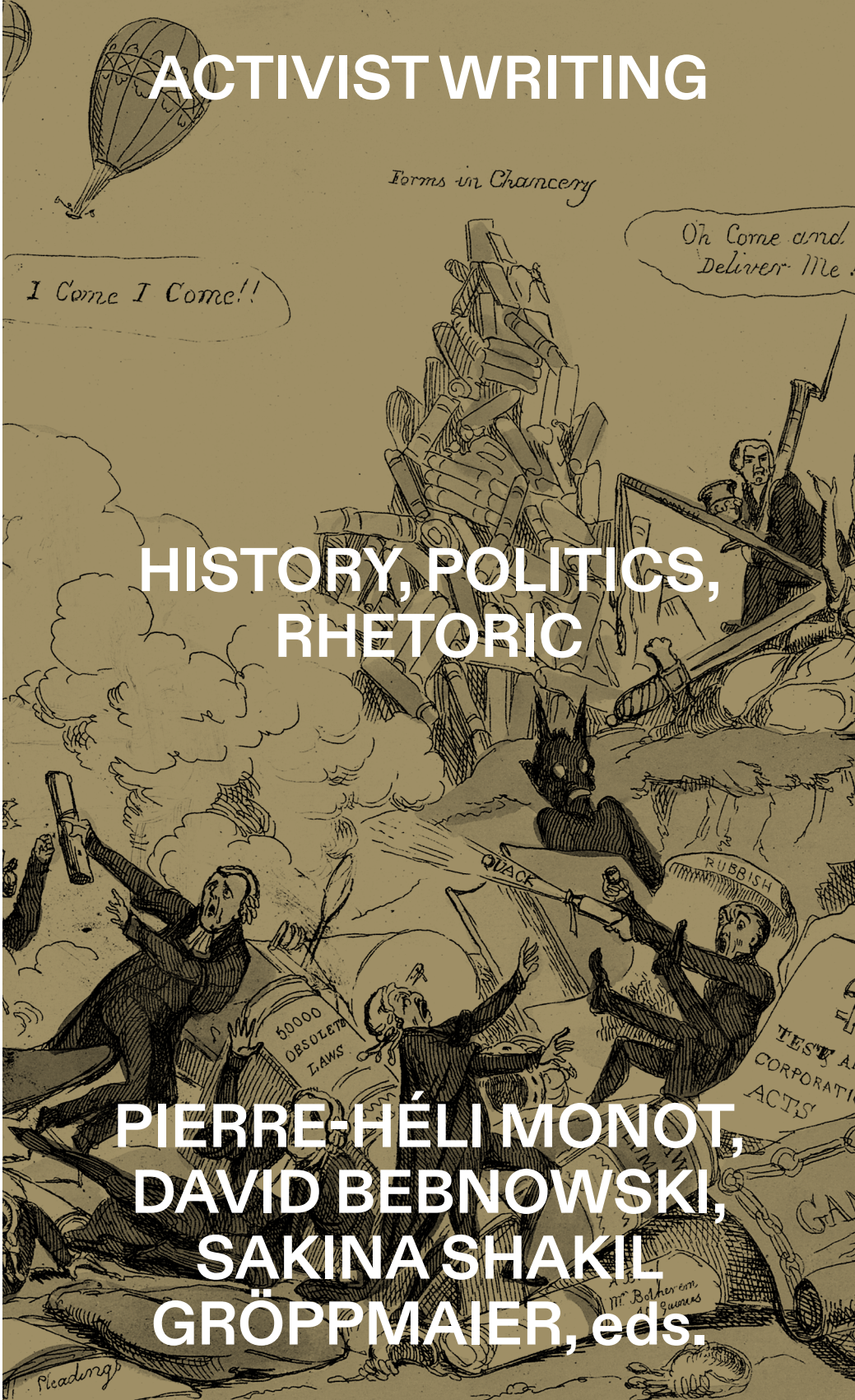
intercomverlag

ACTIVIST WRITING



HISTORY, POLITICS, RHETORIC

PIERRE-HÉLI MONOT, DAVID BEBNOWSKI, SAKINA SHAKIL GRÖPPMAIER, eds.

Mono 02

OPEN ACCESS
intercom-mono.com/02

EXTRA CONTENT
intercom-mono.com/extra/02

ACTIVIST WRITING

HISTORY, POLITICS, RHETORIC

PIERRE-HÉLI MONOT,
DAVID BEBNOWSKI,
SAKINA SHAKIL
GRÖPPMAIER, eds.

INTRODUCTION 07
Pierre Héli-Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier

ART, AUTONOMY, PHILOLOGY: RESEARCH PARAMETERS 15
Pierre-Héli Monot

APPROACHES 25

POSTURES 27
Christoph Streb
SHORT-CIRCUITING PUBLICITY 39
Nils C. Kumkar
CIRCULATIONS 51
Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier

AESTHETICS 65

PRETTY PAMPHLETS 67
Pierre-Héli Monot
REPRODUCING FREDERICK DOUGLASS 83
Dustin Breitenwischer
BORN-TRANSLATED MANIFESTO 97
Stefanie Kremmel

AGENTS 113

PRESSING SOCIAL ORDERS 115
David Bebnowski
MATERIAL FOR AGITATION 129
Daphne Weber
MASS VIOLENCE IN PAMPHLETS 141
Juliane Prade-Weiss, Vladimir Petrović

ACCESS 157

IDA WELLS'S PRINT ACTIVISM 159
Florian Sedlmeier
GAGA META-MANIFESTOS 173
Laura Handl, Carsten Junker

ANNEX 185

Bibliography 187
Picture Credits 198
Acknowledgments 200

INTRODUCTION

PIERRE HÉLI-MONOT, DAVID BEBNOWSKI, SAKINA SHAKIL GRÖPPMAIER





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier: "Introduction", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 7–13.

CHANGE

The humanities and the social sciences have developed several influential theories of social reproduction and social stability. We can, for instance, explain with reasonable accuracy how some essential vectors of social stratification remain impervious to critique and contestation. Yet, we have precious few theories of social change, despite the string of classical categories that make up the core of any politological lexicon: reform, revolution, adaptation, adjustment, etc. This lack is interesting, as one would expect societies to have devised the kind of epistemic tools by which they could explain their successes to themselves. Thus, in a nicely paradoxical fashion, theories of desirable and successful social change might make change more consistently reproducible.

There are several reasons why societies oriented towards goods they explicitly value often fail to derive theories of how best to attain them. Notably, changes in the normative structure of societies usually depend on incremental microadjustments to the way social actors perceive their own interest, enunciate the import of their political wills, form pressure groups to obtain and secure them, elaborate practical ways to materialize and institutionalize them, and voice criticism to revise and readjust them. In fact, isolating efficient modes of social change from the thick historicity and contingency of political action usually entails highly specified, painstaking scholarly work. In turn, the complex material that is commonly extracted from such work does not easily lend itself to grand theoretical abstractions. As such, historical accounts of *longue durée* normative transformations – of precisely the kind that justly support the history of Modernity as a progressive one – usually depend on the elision of colossal amounts of archival material and of a fundamental facet of political life: participation, understood as a concrete agential practice anchored in concrete social settings.

To complicate matters further, the notion of participation itself has been the object of frequent misunderstandings throughout the development of democratic politics. While legitimate forms of political participation are usually codified in constitutions and ingrained in political habits, and while illegitimate forms of political participation are usually framed by civil and penal law, more ambiguous ways of taking part in organized political life are often legally precarious and conceptually ill-defined.

ACTIVISM

The term "activism", the first of the two concepts that make up the title of this collection, is an eminent case in point. Its prevalence in both colloquial and professional political discourse is deceptive, as the term came into common usage much later than any of the other great concepts mentioned above. Emerging not during, but *after* the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s,[1] it made it possible to

1 Mancur Olson: *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1965); Charles Tilly: *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, MA: Addison Wesley (1978).

take stock of the vast reorganization of political life that had occurred since the end of WWII and to distinguish "activists" from the related social roles that had characterized the 19th and earlier 20th century.

First, it allowed for a fuzzier understanding of participation that reflected the growing social acceptance of political contestation in democratic societies. "Activism" could now include merely occasional or strictly symbolic participation in the politics of contestation in a way that concepts such as "protesting", "organizing", "demonstrating", or "campaigning" never could – to say nothing of the influential rhetoric of late 1960s "radicalism": "enemies", "threats", "tactics", "targets", "attacks".[2] Hence, from the perspective of older generations of engaged social actors, "activism" stood at the intersection of the democratization *and* deradicalization of social protest.

Secondly, "activists" tended to have an increasingly ambivalent understanding of the way the "cause" on whose behalf they acted related to overarching political frameworks. "Activism" made it possible to think of impassioned political engagement in a way that did not necessarily implicate the whole political fabric. Quite the contrary, in fact: social actors could now pour their heart and soul into acting towards particular ends while staying clear of objectively risky involvements with more all-encompassing forms of political negation. Historically and synthetically, "activism" can hence be thought of both as a belated consequence of the disciplinary effects of cold-war political repression and as the earliest forms of what would soon become a fully legitimate social activity, itself soon to be differentiated into (sometimes lucrative) subactivities: activism, artivism, hacktivism, etc.

This volume takes "activism" to be the most recent evolution of what has always constituted politics as seen from the perspective of the politically dominated.[3] In doing so, this volume presents essays that explicitly do not match the contours of current activism, but rather those of previous forms of popular participation. We historicize, theorize, and sometimes criticize what has become the dominant horizon of political dissatisfaction. In doing so, we reflect on the different elements that constitute the arena of contemporary protest and public controversy.

The fact that *longue durée* accounts of social progress usually depend on the elision of activist work (understood in the rather narrow sense outlined above) does not mean that nothing can be known or said about this crucial social activity. In fact, activism is dependent on various *infrastructures*.[4] All of them are part of the archives of political history: the establishment and maintenance of communication and circulation networks, the organization of typical activist events ranging from marches to media campaigns, the collection of data among populations (grievances, demands, strategies, expectations), the development of a legal

2 Saul Alinsky: *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, New York: Vintage Books (1989 [1971]).

3 Louis Althusser: *Machiavelli and Us*, London: Verso (1999).

4 Niklas Barth, Pierre-Héli Monot: "Negationen der Negationskontrolle: Eine Infrastrukturgeschichte polemogener Rede", in: *Medien der Infrastruktur*, ed. by Friedrich Balke, Bernhard Siegert, Joseph Vogl, forthcoming.

basis for specific demands, the accumulation of para-political arguments (notably statistical and historical data), and the consolidation of individuals into organized pressure groups. Ultimately, critical historical work can recover what is usually lost in the narrative arcs of the histories of progress, provided these infrastructures and the practices they entail are placed center stage.

HISTORY

Traditionally, narratives of social change typically contributed to producing histories with leading actors and specific moments of institutional development. Starting with the poststructuralist turn of the late twentieth century, such approaches underwent significant criticism. Human agency and individual historical actors were "decentered" and grand histories of progress and social change were questioned in efforts to undermine established narratives. The charge of "fictionality" was leveled against historical accounts deemed to be overly self-confident and homogenous.

Studying activist writing allows scholars to focus on the concrete practical and ideological transformations of social and literary history: we study history bottom up as a fundamentally contentious space. Historicizing activist writing means diving deep into sources that are often excluded from dominant or hegemonic discourses. Herein, we see activist writing both as a practice and as an archive for social change. As a practice, activist writers make claims, advance causes, and persuade or dissuade publics. Activist writers take stances on what they see as requiring change and position their work as a fundamentally political, non-institutional practice. As an archive for social change, activist literature mobilizes sympathetic or susceptible publics and, conversely, antagonizes resistant and antagonist ones – activist literature is efficacious not only in the moment in which it is written and read, but also through the stories this literature can later be used to tell.

This presents challenges, but also major opportunities which can enrich perspectives and studies on social change. Activist writing allows for incorporating non-institutional and marginal agents as drivers of historical change – either major or subsidiary, subversive or compliant, non-institutional or systemic.

Activists write in many ways. They write letters, like Émile Zola did in 1898 with his open letter calling out the French government during the Dreyfus affair. They write engaged analyses as the Combahee River Collective did in 1977, identifying systems of "interlocking oppression" and for the first outlining the concept of "identity politics." They make speeches, like Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman," in which she called out the treatment of Black women compared to white women; this phrase has circulated widely since 1851, even though Sojourner Truth most likely never uttered these precise words.

They write manuals, like Che Guevara's 1961 *Guerilla Warfare* that was intended as a how-to handbook for radical insurgents engaged in combat. They write declarations, like the "Declaration of Sentiments" by the women's rights

activists of Seneca Falls in 1848, or the "Manifesto of the 121" by French intellectuals opposing the war in Algeria in 1960. They write autobiographies, like Frederick Douglass's *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, published in 1845. They write tweets, like Mesut Özil's 2018 viral statement that declared his resignation from the German national team and accused the German public of racism. They write programs, like Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale did in 1966 with "What We Want Now!, What We Believe: The Black Panther Party Ten-Point Platform" that outlined the Black Panthers' demands for African-American rights in US society. They write slogans, like those present in campaign flyers, brochures, and posters, whether for political campaigns, for war, or for revolution. They write manifestoes, like Karl Marx and Frederick Engel's 1848 "Communist Manifesto" that would become the cornerstone for communist political ideology in the following century as well as one of the best-selling books of all time. And they write pamphlets, a form in which all others may be subsumed.[5]

WRITING

Writing is perhaps the single most historically important type of infrastructure for activist politics in that it provides instructions for political actions and an archive of political confrontation. It is no surprise that focusing on writing comes with heavy theoretical baggage and recurrent terminological debates. Throughout this book, we emphasize the productivity of a central genre and practice of activist writing: the pamphlet. As a high-circulation, low-threshold format, the pamphlet displays a set of defining characteristics that bind the various subtypes of activist writing discussed above.[6]

Our understanding of activist writing does not sit easily with approaches that have become prevalent in the humanities. First of all, "activist writing" is a stand-in category. It refers to an array of literary forms and social practices that political, protest-driven, non-institutional agents use to further their causes. This approach, which emphasizes the agency of authors, has largely become unfashionable in scholarship on political change and activism. More often than not, activism and the specific claims of activists are taken to emerge through and within public discourse. In these accounts, latent and seemingly individualized grievances aggregate into contentious discourses. They circulate without any significant agency of individual actors. These discourse-driven models emphasize transformations and routinely discard eruptive breakthroughs and the revolutionary longings at play in many activist texts. Seen in this light, social action is not only deeply influenced by, but also entwined with existing power structures which preclude the contestation of these very structures from the "outside". Individual authors are relegated to the status of nodes in a discursive web. Their concrete functions as

5 Many of these texts are included in our online anthology of polemical literature; see Pierre-Héli Monot (ed.): *The Arts of Autonomy: A Living Anthology of Polemical Literature,* Munich: The Arts of Autonomy, https://artsautonomy.hypotheses.org.

6 Pierre-Héli Monot: "Art, Autonomy, Philology: Research Parameters" in this volume.

participants in activist politics is declared to be at best irrelevant, at worst a mere effect of the discursive web itself.

With this volume, we want to offer different, more nuanced accounts of activist writing as a political practice and a literary-historical tradition. While the prevalent attention to discursivity and non-authoriality has provided essential insights into the logic of collective action, our take on activist writing presents an opportunity to break with ultimately dispiriting notions of political action. In fact, the practice of activist writing makes it possible for historians to relate political causes to the public sphere by focusing on concrete acts of confrontation and their impact on the public. Activist writing requires action and active agents. The burial of the author was premature; the author is alive and seems instead to be driven by a sense of autonomy and self-empowerment. Authors accuse those in power and claim agency. This entails the willingness to take the risk of being held accountable by those in power. In doing so, activist writers as individuals or collectives break through the surface of the social and political ordinary. They take on the responsibility of framing collective discontent as identifiable authors. Crucially, these authors are aware of their position within the social structure and act upon their insights as socially embedded agents. Driven by the aim of transforming these social relationships, of which authors are always a part, they become activists through their writing.[7]

Activists are communicators and writing is the practice with which they most clearly and concisely communicate their intentions and demands. Their messages are addressed to the general public in order to speak a "provisional constituency" into existence.[8] Activists are willing to take risks because they expect that their actions will lead to a better political future. Lucien Goldman's remarks about Marxists can be applied to activists of other ideological stripes: they are making a wager on a historical future which they need to accomplish by their own actions.[9] This commitment explains why activist writing can often be exclamatory, polemical, rude, brash, and accusatory. Ultimately, these characteristics embody the commitment of activists.

Thus, activist writing is a deliberate puncturing of the fabric of institutionalized politics and social life. It is an effort to demand change, to reclaim ground and steer into unknown but auspicious territory. It is the space where political agency seeks to undo political paralysis. Studying activist writing offers an opportunity to observe the moment when power is challenged.

This volume gathers a wide range of essays on the tradition and practices of activist writing. It was inspired by ideas discussed and exchanged by the authors during a conference on "Activist Writing," organized at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich in February 2022, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and at the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The authors of these essays

7 Walter Benjamin: "The Author as Producer [1934]", in: idem: *Understanding Brecht*, London: Verso (1998), pp. 85–103.

8 Janet Lyon: "Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic", in: *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 5/1 (1991), pp. 101–127, p. 104.

9 Lucien Goldmann: *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the "Penseés" of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine*, London: Routledge (1964).

come from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds and employ a broad array of methods. Their perspectives on activist writing – and on activism itself – are heterogenous and contribute to a multifaceted historical understanding of what are defining political activities: writing, reading, contesting.

ART, AUTONOMY, PHILOLOGY: RESEARCH PARAMETERS

PIERRE-HÉLI MONOT





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Pierre-Héli Monot: "Art, Autonomy, Philology: Research Parameters", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 15–23.

> "In effect, the idea of critique is meaningful only when there is a difference between a desirable and an actual state of affairs." Luc Boltanski, Ève Chiapello: *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (1999)

INTRODUCTION

This short paper outlines the basic working definitions of the research project "The Arts of Autonomy: Pamphleteering, Popular Philology, and the Public Sphere, 1988–2018", funded by a Starting Grant from the European Research Council. These definitions outline our object of study and impact the general orientation of our research.

Why do some texts become the object of intense public discussion? How does the public identify the polemical content of pamphletary statements, and how does the public rationalize and discuss these statements? What can the literary humanities contribute to our understanding of such "pamphletary events" in the public sphere?

In the last three decades, the spectacular resurgence of pamphleteering as a mode of political address has been correlated with the resurgence of polemical speech and assertions of autonomy in public discourse. Since the Dreyfus Affair and Émile Zola's "J'accuse...!" (1898), short, partisan, and incitative texts have been a vital medium of modern public intellectuality.[1] More recently, however, the increased recourse to legal procedures in case of offense or injustice has contrastively brought out the pamphlet's ability to institute discursive standards, behavioral expectations, and norms in the public sphere. This project argues that pamphleteering is one of the crucial discursive forms in contemporary public discourse and that its systematic study as a literary and rhetorical form is essential in order to gain an understanding of the formation of opinion and policy in Europe and the United States. We study "pamphletary events", i.e., events which unfold in the public sphere and which engage both a pamphletary text and interpretative competences widely distributed among the general reading public.

This project addresses three crucial scholarly desiderata. First, most scholarly accounts of modern pamphleteering predate the generalization of internet access, anonymous online commentary, and interlinking. In these earlier accounts, modern pamphleteering is a monological speech act in a liberal public sphere, with all the exclusionary effects this conception entails. This project argues against this conception and for an approach that takes both the universal online accessibility of polemical pamphleteering and its transformation into a dialogical tool as its historical premise. Secondly, earlier accounts of pamphleteering attribute a degree of historical efficacy to the pamphlet yet tend to do so on theoretical or formal grounds.[2] This project argues against this conception

1 See especially Michel Winock's seminal study: Michel Winock: *Le siècle des intellectuels*, Paris: Seuil (1997).

2 David Forgacs: "Fascism, Violence and Modernity", in: *The Violent Muse: Violence and the*

and for a contextual history of pamphleteering that studies its concrete political agency by considering the short-delay responses given to its pamphletary claims by reading publics. Finally, earlier accounts of pamphleteering emphasize its prophetic individualism and remote humanitarianism. This project argues against this conception and seeks to understand how groups that form around one or multiple experiences of social domination make use of pamphleteering to autonomously advance collective claims *on their own behalf*.

THE PAMPHLET: A FUNCTIONALIST DEFINITION

Any cultural taxonomy involves complex arguments as to the relevant properties of the objects to be identified and classified. The pamphlet is an eminent case in point, as most pamphlets do not self-identify as such. This project reframes pamphleteering as an *event in the public sphere*, rather than as a literary genre or form.[3] Against formalist definitions of the pamphlet,[4] we expand the literary ontology of pamphleteering to include the public responses given to a pamphletary text, producing "pamphletary events" that imprint subjects of debate or controversy on the public sphere.

We reject text length, publication format, and generic self-descriptions (a nominal "manifesto," an "open letter," "novel," or "poem" may be a pamphlet) as decisive criteria: We study the pamphlet as a literary mode, a type of literacy, and a moment in the public sphere.

We suggest four basic criteria that literary texts must meet in order to be considered as relevant sources:

The *first generic criterion* concerns the implied audience of pamphletary writing. We define pamphletary writing as one which explicitly addresses an audience rhetorically construed as one or multiple social totalities: The individual, empirical reader[5] is addressed as a member of a social group or collective audience. These audiences are either implied in the very title of these pamphlets (for example Stéphane Hessel's *Indignez-vous!*[6]) or in their argumentative content (for example Mesut Özil's 3000-word resignation from the German Football Association posted on Twitter, which polemicized on the double-bind of being a bi-national member of a national sports team[7]), or in their thematization of the concrete geographical and social generality of their addressees (for example Ted

Artistic Imagination in Europe, 1910–1939, ed. by Jane Howlet, Rod Mengham, Manchester: Manchester University Press (1994), pp. 5–21.

3 See for instance: Alexandra Halasz: *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997).

4 Joad Raymond: *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2003).

5 Fredric Jameson: *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1981), p. 174.

6 Stéphane Hessel: *Indignez-vous!*, Montpellier: Indigène éditions (2010).

7 Mesut Özil: "Meeting President Erdogan", in: *Twitter*, https : / / twitter . com / MesutOzil1088/status/1020984884431638528 (July 22, 2018).

Kaczynski's "Industrial Society and its Future",[8] published in 1995). The pamphlet is a *society-at-large* discourse.

The *second generic criterion* pertains to the political intentionality of the pamphlet. Pamphlets must radically contest an established normative order and simultaneously uphold the abstract value of normativity itself, that is, they must argue, polemicize, or campaign in favor of a normative *change* and the acquisition or modification of *rights*. Because pamphlets are particularly prone to becoming the object of institutional control, censorship, expurgation, or indexation, this ambiguous attention to norms is often expressed in legal terms. Pamphletary statements are often written in light of their "social efficacy." As such, pamphleteers dispense with rhetorical strategies that would undermine this efficacy should 1) their pamphletary statements be brought in as legal or deliberative evidence by an institution *whose legitimacy they recognize* in the context of 2) a legal or sociopolitical procedure *which might reasonably contribute to the material advancement of their pamphletary claims*. The pamphlet has become one of the main means of public contestation and transformation of established normative orders.

The *third generic criterion* concerns the temporal frame of pamphletary statements. Pamphlets explicitly address the present and conceive of the present as a generalized addressee. In other words, the social totalizations implied in pamphletary statements are conceived of as being contemporary with these pamphletary statements themselves. This does not necessarily imply a narrowing down of the temporal horizon of these statements, which often support their claims with historical arguments, and make prophetic or conjectural claims about future consequences of past and present actions.

The *fourth generic criterion* attributes a high degree of agency to the addressees of pamphletary statements. We conceive of the term "pamphlet" as a predicate implicitly or explicitly *attributed by the audience* to statements that circulate in the public sphere: pamphlets are pamphlets because they are recognized and treated as such by reading publics. We suggest two second-order criteria that condition this identification:

> a) Pamphlets must be serially and transversally transmitted among the public, that is, they must to some degree become *viral*, at least in the sense that they become accessible to readers not originally addressed by the pamphlet itself,
>
> b) they must trigger specific individual and collective modes of literacy intent on normalizing their polemical content.

Some statements become "pamphlets" despite differing self-descriptions. Conversely, some statements explicitly intended to be perceived as pamphlets may

8 Reprinted in: Theodore J. Kaczynski: *Technological Slavery: The Collected Writings of Theodore J. Kaczynski, a.k.a. The Unabomber*, ed. by David Skrbina, Port Townsend: Feral House (2010), pp. 36–120.

best be described as "failed pamphlets" in that they fail both to be acknowledged as such and to trigger public discussions of their claims.

In all but a few notable exceptions, the pamphlets studied in the context of our Research Group fulfill all four of these criteria.

PAMPHLETARY EVENTS

We overturn the prevalent definition of the pamphlet; we study pamphletary statements as *pamphletary events*. We hereby modify the prevalent scholarly conception of the ontology of literary discourse in that we reject phenomenological approaches to textual reception and claim that pamphletary events make literature observable as a social fact. In the wake of the universalization of internet access, scholarship has increasingly addressed the reading and interpretative patterns of "ordinary readers," as distinct from specialist forms of literacy. This project conceives of the pamphlet as a two-fold "pamphletary event" which takes place in the public sphere, comprised of the pamphletary statement itself and of its active reception by reading publics.

Scholarship has noted the pamphlet's propensity to reach widely scattered segments of the reading public. Pamphlets go viral through reproduction and intertextualization (print), and interlinking and commentary (online), leaving traces that can be studied with accuracy: We can trace how pamphletary statements emerge from their original, local contexts and become the object of large-scale interest. In fact, the history of pamphleteering is inextricably linked to the concept of virality, which has itself become one of the recurrent terms used to characterize the contemporary public sphere, especially in light of the ongoing generalization of internet access.

What can the traces left by viral pamphletary propagation tell us about the public sphere? Media studies and political theory emphasize how "gatekeeping" drives information flows in networks: some network actors, either individual, collective, or institutional, have a strong impact on how, when, if, and how often statements are shared across networks.[9] In these models, gatekeepers function as restrictive instances who actively inhibit selected information flows. Contrastively, this project studies the constructive function of gatekeepers in the development of partial, temporary public spheres, or *deliberative clusters*, creating provisory "safe havens" for the reception of contentious claims. By using a historical methodology and focus, we describe how and when these clusters become permeable and let pamphletary statements spread to other, larger deliberative groups, producing identifiable textual traces.

9 Karine Nahon, Jeff Hemsley: *Going Viral*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2013), pp. 57–60.

POPULAR PHILOLOGY

This project contributes to the current cross-disciplinary project to redefine "philology" as a broader set of interpretative and critical competences. We understand "popular philology" to be a type of *literacy* more widely disseminated among the public than is commonly understood under the rubric of philological methodology, academic literary theory, and specialized reading dispositions.[10] Popular philological competences include, but are not limited to, the ability to broadly assess the assertiveness, vehemence, spreadability, attributability, and addressability of pamphletary statements.[11] We take a bottom-up, quotidian, and hence "popular" approach to the social uses of reading and interpreting texts.

By studying popular philological literacy during major discursive crises, this project contributes to the emerging "civic turn"[12] in the philological humanities. So far, the intersection between civic competences and popular literacy has been addressed by way of canonical historical examples, for instance by describing the popular, non-specialist perception of early twentieth-century novels in the context of the democratization of literature and the emergence of paperback publishing.[13] This project challenges this approach by addressing the intrusion of literature into contemporary public discourse triggered by pamphletary events, thereby testing the disciplinary hypothesis of the value of philological competences for the evaluation, normalization, or radicalization of polemical claims in the public sphere.

The pamphlet is eminently suited for the study of popular philological competences because its reception entails several major philological-interpretative skills. Scholarship has noted that most pamphletary statements explicitly rouse their readers to take action on behalf of a group or a cause; in this model, the efficacy of the pamphlet is limited to its material, concrete effects on social history.[14] Indeed, scholarship has tended to overlook the fact that most pamphlets do not produce social upheavals, revolutions, or secessions, while remaining socially efficacious by other means: The reception of pamphletary statements entails a form of *generic irony* that enables the transformation of incitative calls into discursive material that is suited for deliberation. The pamphlet's actionist or activist horizon is discursivized and its often massively ideological content is segmented into distinct claims by reading publics. This exercise in ideological decomposition is often the product of collective efforts: Reading communities and heterogeneously assembled individuals collectively offer affirmative substantiations or counterarguments to pamphletary statements. This project produces contextual analyses

10 A disciplinary position which has, in turn, produced several polemical statements, most notably: Sheldon Pollock: "Philology and Freedom", in: *Philological Encounters* 1 (2016), pp. 4–30.

11 See also: David Karpf: *Analytic Activism: Digital Listening and the New Political Strategy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2016), pp. 95–120.

12 Peter Brooks, Hilary Jewett (eds.): *The Humanities and Public Life*, New York: Fordham University Press (2014).

13 Rosa A. Eberly: *Citizen Critics: Literary Public Spheres*, Urbana: University of Chicago Press (2000).

14 Nicholas Hengen Fox: *Reading as Collective Action: Text as Tactics*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press (2017), pp. 53–70.

of pamphletary events and describes both how pamphletary statements trigger public debates and how popular literacy uses external pamphletary statements in order to advance claims in the public sphere.

We describe and analyze "slices" of evolving public opinion on specific pamphletary statements, rather than the general evolution of public opinion or public "mood"[15] on often loosely circumscribed subjects of debate, as is prevalent in hedonometric studies. We define popular philology as a form of attention that can be studied by using twelve evaluative variables. We define these observable variables of literacy as:

Spreadability: perceived likelihood of a pamphletary text or pamphletary fragment (accusations, revelations, calumny, "*mot juste*") of "going viral"

Vehemence: perceived radicality of pamphletary statement

Figurativeness: perceived degree of the non-literality of vehemence (variable 2), implying corresponding degrees of generic irony and interpretative competence

Literariness: perceived degree to which figurativeness can be attributed to aesthetic strategies

Assertiveness: perceived degree of affirmative, as opposed to argumentative, substantiation

Familiarity: perceived degree to which a pamphletary statement is representative of an already familiar political tradition or social cause

Embeddedness: perceived degree to which a pamphletary statement has received public recognition as a subject of debate or ground for activist measures

Attributability: perceived degree to which authorship can be ascertained

Addressability: observable degree to which second-order statements are voiced *as* implied or explicit addressees

Feasibility: perceived ability to give course, institutionally or non-institutionally, to measures proposed by a pamphletary statement

Desirability: perceived benefit of measures proposed by a pamphletary statement

15 Johan Bollen, Alberto Pepe, Huina Mao: "Modeling Public Mood and Emotion: Twitter Sentiment and Socio-Economic Phenomena", in: *Proceedings of the Fifth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, Palo Alto: AAAI Press (2009), pp. 450–453.

Legality: perceived position of pamphletary statement and pamphletary aims with respect to established normative orders

These variables derive from the mixed methodology we use and are operative in the relevant disciplines. Variable 1 is operative in literary and media studies, as well as in subdisciplines such as network aesthetics.[16] Variables 2 to 9 are operative in aesthetics, the philological humanities, and neighboring disciplines. Variables 8 to 12 are operative in the social sciences, marketing analysis, and legal studies. All variables have their own historicity. We evaluate every second-order statement with respect to as many of these twelve variables as can be reliably assessed. By including variables that are explanatory as to the agency or potential agency of pamphletary statements, we describe contemporary pamphleteering as a social practice, and describe how readers apply forms of popular literacy in order to crystallize their aspirations and demands.

LITERATURE AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Cultural historians have developed complex accounts of the origins and transformations of cultural forms, practices, and patterns: the multiplication of *novelistic devices* in the 18th century, for instance, or the standardization of *point of view* in the 19th century, the empirical correction of pictorial *point-projection perspective* in the Renaissance, or the effects of *mechanical reproduction* on the consumption of culture have all been the object of sustained critical attention and patient pedagogical labor. Their tacit – and correct – implication has long been taken for granted across disciplines in the humanities: cultural forms are the products of historical processes.

As objects of *social* history, however, these forms raise several important problems which cultural history has paid little attention to. Thinking about the *social uses* of cultural forms oversteps questions that pertain to the historical origins, transformations, valuations, or eventual demise of specific cultural practices. Studies of the social uses of literature also move beyond questions of *representation* and *performance*, which have been dominant paradigms in literary history for so long that they often seem to be perceived as self-evident, near-natural categories.

Hence, a social history of cultural forms entails a decisive shift of emphasis in historical methodology: It tends to think of cultural forms as objects of instrumental reason, that is, as tools, weapons, or tokens that are employed for specific ends. There is, of course, a very significant overlap of both historical traditions, and clear conceptual demarcations are difficult to establish. For all practical matters, they are also of little import for concrete historical scholarship. There is, however, a general shift in the kinds of questions we think are worth asking about cultural forms in general and the social uses of literature in particular.

16 Patrick Jagoda: *Network Aesthetics*, Chicago: University Press of Chicago (2016), pp. 181–219.

In fact, scholarship knows next to nothing about how and why populations (be they citizens or not) resort to literary texts to actively make use of their social agency, that is, to engage in political and social processes. We have no consistent account of how populations *use* literary discourse to pursue strictly instrumental goals, such as securing civil rights, obtaining territorial autonomy, or enforcing legal changes. We know populations do, yet we know neither how nor why they resort to literature to demand or enforce normative changes in the first place. We also have few concrete descriptions of how ordinary, non-professional readers make sense of literary discourse: The overwhelming majority of literary scholarship tacitly invokes a professional, highly literate reader (often, and with good reason, an implied "peer-reviewer"), rather than "ordinary" readers who have had little or no formal training in the interpretation and evaluation of texts.

How do people perceive, discuss, and evaluate imaginaries displayed by pamphlets? Literature as a social institution vouchsafes a range of attitudinal dispositions and heuristic habits that are essential to any social history of political contestation. Polemical literary claims, once effectuated by reading publics, make literature observable as a social fact.

APPROACHES

POSTURES

CHRISTOPH STREB





This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Christoph Streb: "Postures", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 27–38.

"The pamphlet is a one-man show."
George Orwell: *British Pamphleteers* (1948)

PAMPHLETEERS

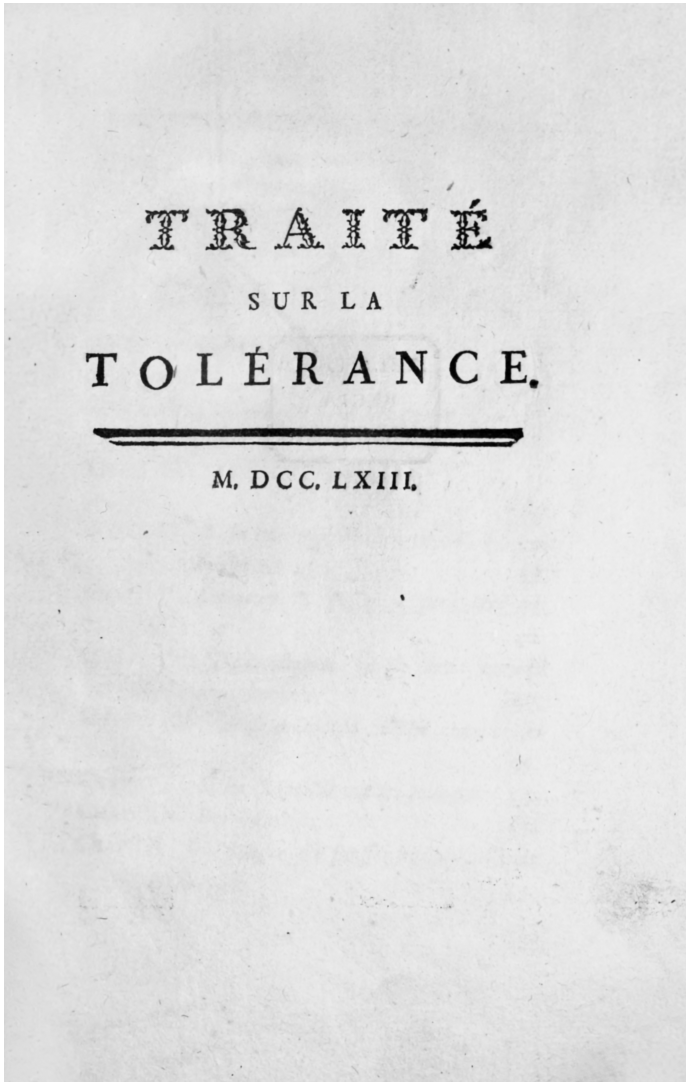
George Orwell was a keen collector of pamphlets, acquiring no fewer than 2,700 of them in his lifetime.[1] For him, the pamphlet was a particular literary form that, although having existed for a long time without major modifications, had now fallen into neglect and deserved to be revitalized. He had the opportunity to express his opinions on pamphlets when he wrote the introduction to a collection of British pamphlets brought together by the writer and poet Reginald Reynolds in 1948. Here, by characterizing the pamphlet as a "one-man show," Orwell identified the strong presence of the pamphleteer as a defining character trait of the genre. It seems likely that he was also behind the final decision on the title of the collection, which was not *British Pamphlets*, but *British Pamphleteers*. For Orwell, for Reynolds, and for the historian A.J.P. Taylor, who introduced the second volume, pamphlets were all about personalities: "Individualism is the essence of the successful pamphlet. It is the most immediate and the most personal of all literary forms."[2]

It is however problematic to consider all pamphlets, from Gutenberg to the Internet, as a one-man show. Ironically, a large number of pamphlets in the *British Pamphleteers* collection, in particular those dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had originally been published without any mention of their authors' names. In this period, in Britain as much as elsewhere, even towering intellectual figures did not sign their polemical publications. Their entire texts lacked any kind of personal information or more explicit signs of individuality. While it is true that these pamphleteers rarely wished to remain anonymous at all costs, and their names did (sometimes) circulate by means of other media, it was nonetheless difficult to discover the identity of a particular pamphlet's author with nothing to go on but the sheets of paper in your hands, or a glance at a title page on a peddler's stand. Far from openly expressing the individuality of a strong authorial figure, a large majority of pamphlets concealed the pamphleteer behind a mask. Who was the author of a publication like the 1763 *Traité sur la tolérance*? Just by looking at the title page, it was impossible to tell.

Although pamphleteers did not customarily betray their personalities in their published texts, they must have started to do so at some point in history, and this may have made Orwell believe it had never been otherwise. Indeed, in the final decades of the eighteenth century, if curious readers having no previous knowledge wanted to find out more about the author of a pamphlet, they could

1 This collection can be found in the British Library (London). See Claudia Treacher: "Orwell's Political Pamphlet 'Solar System': A Network Interpretation of a British Library Collection", in: *Electronic British Library Journal* (2022), n.p. [article 5].

2 A.J.P. Taylor, Reginald Reynolds (eds.): *British Pamphleteers, Vol. 2: From the French Revolution to the Nineteen-Thirties*, London: Allan Wingate (1951), p. 7.



1 *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763), title page, München: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

gain satisfaction more easily than before. Many polemical writers, like Thomas Paine, now chose to have their names printed on the title pages of their publications. Many also wrote exhaustively about their own personal experiences and included autobiographical information in their own texts. Without waiting, and without relying on insider knowledge, polemical writers made themselves accessible to all their readers at once and to the same extent. It is not until these decades that we encounter the conviction that a pamphlet ought to be "a one-man show," "the most personal of all literary forms."

The heroic ideal of "the pamphleteer," if we continue along this path, dissolves into the history of multiple postures. The concept of the *posture d'auteur*, developed by literary sociologist and novelist Jérôme Meizoz, is particularly useful when approaching pamphlet authorship as an act of public self-fashioning. "Whoever prints a work," Meizoz writes, "imposes a self-image that goes beyond his or her identity as a citizen."[3] A posture is a gesture or practice by means of which writers, in the texts and paratexts of their own publications, describe and justify their own activity. It involves concrete decisions: whether to use the word "I," to put one's name on the title page, to include a printed portrait, or to write extensively about one's personal experiences. At the same time, postures are not individual creations. They convey general claims about writing and communication and only gain significance in real and imagined interaction between writers and their audience. They present individual variations of historically situated "repertoires," to use another of Meizoz's categories.

Focusing on postures, therefore, not only sheds light on an important rupture at some point in the late eighteenth century when pamphleteers ripped off their masks. It also entails studying the making and unmaking of a plurality of polemical styles, and, somewhat in opposition to Orwell's opinions about polemical writing, emphasizing the variety of different things that pamphlets have been over the course of a more than 500-year-long history that began with the advent of printing.

ANTI-POSTURES

The early modern era is a strange world of print with its own rules that cannot simply be considered from a modern perspective. Hence the need to abstain from approaching sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pamphlet cultures with a modern understanding of authorship. Obviously, early modern polemical writing was itself extremely heterogeneous. Yet a common feature was that a large majority of pamphlets appeared anonymously or under a pseudonym. The writer who had published the *Traité sur la tolérance* some years earlier insisted on the general necessity of reserved authorship in another anonymous publication in 1770:

> We believe that the author of a good work must avoid three things, the title page, the dedicatory epistle, and the preface. The others must avoid a fourth, that is writing. As for the title page, if he has the rage to put his name on it, which is often very dangerous, it must at least be in a modest form [...] The *Moi* is hateful, said Pascal. Talk about yourself as little as possible, because you must know that the reader's self-esteem is as great as yours. He will never forgive you for wanting to condemn him to esteem you. It is up to your book to speak for itself, if it succeeds in being read by the large number.

3 Jérôme Meizoz: *Postures littéraires: mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Geneva: Slatkine (2007), p. 16. All translations of French quotations are by the author.

> [...] One quotes, comments, criticizes, neglects, forgets, but above all one commonly despises an author who is only an author.[4]

In the eighteenth century, an age that gave considerable value to the subjective self, avoiding all expressions of individuality in polemical writing came across more and more as a choice. We are dealing with what we might call an anti-posture: a deliberate and meaningful absence of all personal elements.[5]

Anti-postures not only create problems of interpretation, but also of presentation. Texts written by modern scholars generally reveal the names of anonymous or pseudonymous authors without giving it a second thought. In doing so, they introduce a significant rupture with the way the same text would have been read by contemporaries, thereby excluding the absence of the author's name from the hermeneutic process at an early stage. At the same time, it would be equally problematic to avoid mentioning these names completely. While some writers took great care to remain completely unknown, anonymity could also be used to slow down the attribution of authorship or involve some readers before others. The closer you were to the social milieu of the writer, the more familiar with his or her previous publications, the longer a publication was out there, and the more successful it became, the easier it was to discover who was actually responsible for this or that polemical text. It is no mean feat to somehow reproduce this mechanism for modern readers. In order to give it a try, absent author names have deliberately not been added to the bibliographical references in this article.

Anonymous and pseudonymous writing was a complicated convention that cannot be understood solely as serving to protect the author from prosecution by religious or political authorities. Masking certainly *was* part of an authorial strategy to operate under difficult circumstances, in a certain way related to Leo Strauss' famous writing and reading "between the lines" typical of premodern illiberal conditions of writing:

> From the point of view of the literary historian at least, there is no more noteworthy difference between the typical premodern philosopher (who is hard to distinguish from the premodern poet) and the typical modern philosopher than that of their attitudes toward "noble (or just) lies," "pious frauds," the "ductus obliquus" or "economy of the truth": Every decent modern reader is bound to be shocked by the mere suggestion that a great man might have deliberately deceived the large majority of his readers.[6]

4 *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie, par des amateurs*, vol. II, s.l. (1770), pp. 372–379.

5 Important scholarship on pamphleteering in the seventeenth and eighteenth century includes: Christian Jouhaud: *Mazarinades: la Fronde des mots*, Paris: Aubier (1985); Joad Raymond: *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2003); Olivier Ferret: *La fureur de nuire: échanges pamphlétaires entre philosophes et antiphilosophes (1750–1770)*, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation (2007); Robert Darnton: *The Devil in the Holy Water, or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press (2010).

6 Leo Strauss: *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1952), p. 35.

But even Strauss implied in his classic text that duplicity was more than an "art of writing" to escape "persecution" in a narrow sense. It could be part of a communication strategy to address readers in particular ways, and notably to show a preference for those readers who possessed insider knowledge or certain cultural, intellectual, or political prerequisites over the larger share of readers who did not.

An anti-posture was more than a negative omission: it was an active practice of political communication.[7] This practice of disguise was heterogeneous and had different meanings. One reason to strip a polemical text of all personal elements was many writers' close relationship with the social and political elite. Here, the absence of a distinct authorial personality served to make publications speak (and thus act) for someone else.[8] In addition, when writers were able to integrate themselves into the social milieu of the aristocracy, which they increasingly did in the eighteenth century, they also often propagated a certain gentlemanly disdain, if not for print in general, then at least for the act of exposing oneself to the vulgar.[9]

From the middle of the eighteenth century, yet another reason for restricted authorship became increasingly important: the necessity of not imposing oneself on the reader and of leaving some space for their own thoughts. An anti-posture became part of the communication strategy of the Enlightenment. It was a practical tool with which to exclude the authority of individuals and create space for the authority of critical discourse and sober reflection. This also explains why disguise and duplicity, and even the carnivalesque, became such crucial stylistic resources for some Enlightenment writers: the masked author served to teach readers to switch perspectives, emancipate their judgment from established hierarchies, and think critically for themselves.[10] None of those variations of impersonal polemical writing disappeared all of a sudden. Yet a new practice of straightforward personalization successively gained more and more prominence until it ultimately became a major factor in late eighteenth-century pamphlet culture.

ENTER THE AUTHOR

While around 1750 few pamphlets bore names, by the 1780s and 1790s many were being published with the signature of the author. Some of the great indi-

7 See e.g., Robert J. Griffin: "Anonymity and Authorship", in: *New Literary History* 30 (1999), pp. 877–895; Stefan Pabst: "Anonymität und Autorschaft: Ein Problemaufriss", in: idem: *Anonymität und Autorschaft: Zur Literatur- und Rechtsgeschichte der Namenlosigkeit*, Berlin: De Gruyter (2011), pp. 1–34.

8 See e.g., Christian Jouhaud: "Les libelles en France au XVIIe siècle: action et publication", in: *Cahiers d'histoire* 90–91 (2003), pp. 33–45.

9 See e.g., Antoine Lilti: *Le monde des salons: sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Fayard (2005); Geoffrey Turnovsky: *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press (2010).

10 Consider e.g., Michael Warner: *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1990), ch. 1, 2, and 3 in particular; Annette Hilker: *Karnavalisierung als Medium der Aufklärung: Fontenelle, Fénelon, Voltaire, Diderot*, Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag (2006).

vidualist outsider figures of late eighteenth-century pamphleteering, men who claimed to stand alone against the world, did in fact have at least one thing in common: the construction of an individualist posture. This construction often followed a typical trajectory. As might be expected, rare were the writers who launched their careers with the publication of a personal pamphlet. In the careers of more and more polemical writers, however, we encounter what they themselves conceived of as decisive moments of personal exposure, characterized by the decision to reveal their names and personalities to the entirety of their readership. This step was often orchestrated by typical arguments about the importance of the author's signature and the cowardice or irresponsibility of anonymous writings. And the name rarely came alone; it often appeared as part of a much broader tendency to mingle polemical arguments with subjective statements and quasi-autobiographical writing.

Consider a first example. Like the vast majority of pamphlets that appeared during the American Revolution, its most successful one, published in Philadelphia in January 1776 under the title *Common Sense*, bore no indication of the author's name. The writer behind *Common Sense*, however, was not to forever adhere to the unwritten law of anonymity and restraint. In the following years, a series of successful writings first established the term "Common Sense" as a signature and trademark, progressively constructing an authorial identity. The name of this writer became an open secret among the colonial elite and also circulated elsewhere. However, it was not until the so-called "Deane affair" of late 1778 and early 1779 that this expressive personal voice came to be explicitly associated with a name: Thomas Paine, who now proudly revealed his identity and authentic personality to the entirety of his readers. In the 1780s and particularly the 1790s, Paine established himself as a public figure by signing a number of controversial political treatises as well as several spectacular open letters to powerful antagonists such as the British Secretary of State, Henry Dundas.

> I am well aware that the signature of Thomas Paine has something in it dreadful to sinecure Placemen and Pensioners; and when you, on seeing the Letter opened, informed the Meeting that it was signed THOMAS PAINE, and added, in a note of exclamation, "the common enemy of us all," you spoke one of the greatest truths you ever uttered if you confine the expression to men of the same description with yourself; men living in indolence and luxury, on the spoil and labours of the Public.[11]

Paine happily assumed the role of a political watchdog and pacesetter for reform and even revolution. In the Great Britain of the 1790s, Paine's name was coupled with that of Edmund Burke in a bid to represent the major intellectual and political dichotomy of the day, namely how to react to the French Revolution. Much more

11 Thomas Paine: *Two Letters to Lord Onslow: Lord Lieutenant of the County of Surry: and One to Mr. Henry Dundas, Secretary of State, on the Subject of the Late Excellent Proclamation*, London: James Ridgway (1792), pp. 31–32.

than a political thinker, Paine had turned himself into a public personality and indeed a popular symbol.[12]

Or take a second example. Among the large number of political tracts published in Paris in 1788, a set of apparently related pamphlets stood out: although the author did not reveal her name, she openly declared herself to be a woman. For a while, it remained unclear who she was. It was not until 1789 that this woman disclosed her identity and claimed these previous productions for herself. Upon which Olympe de Gouges became a pamphleteer and a public figure. In the following years, she would produce almost without interruption a considerable number of typically short political pamphlets. Her now famous *Les droits de la femme,* which was published in the autumn of 1791, was an ultra-personal text and a true one-woman show.

> These, Madame, these are my principles. In speaking to you of my fatherland I am losing sight of the object of this dedication. This is how all good Citizens sacrifice their glory and their interests when they have none other in mind than those of their country. With the deepest respect, Madame, I am your very humble, and very obedient, servant, De Gouges.[13]

This text full of personal statements is but one example of a much larger and no less interesting series of polemical publications on a great variety of subjects. Ever confronted with the obstacle that personal and aggressive writing was considered to be masculine, Gouges nevertheless capitalized on the liberalization of French publishing that came with the advent of the French Revolution to follow her vocation as an author and print on her own account. The writing she produced included all sorts of personal prefaces and afterwords, autobiographical anecdotes, narratives of her endeavors, justifications of her actions, and polemical attacks on her enemies. Ultimately, it was her provocative posturing rather than her feminist arguments that led to her arrest and subsequent death sentence in the autumn of 1793.[14]

BOXERS

The eighteenth century brought with it the construction of a new critical vocation for writers. Previously considered both a necessity and a nuisance, pamphleteering could become a virtuous occupation. At the same time, many Enlightenment thinkers were motivated by an idealized scenario of peaceful public discourse based on the hope that the public would eventually enlighten itself. For that reason, they often stressed that polemical texts ought to be a stimulus for reflection

12 Edward Larkin: *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution*, New York: Cambridge University Press (2005); Thomas Paine: *Collected Writings*, ed. by Eric Foner, New York: Library of America (1995).

13 Olympe de Gouges: *Les droits de la femme*, [Paris] (1791), p. 4.

14 Olivier Blanc: *Olympe de Gouges*, Paris: Syros (1981); Olympe de Gouges: *Écrits politiques*, ed. by Olivier Blanc, Paris: Côté femmes (1993).

rather than a violent force. This created a characteristic tension between the need to be critical and the need to avoid demagoguery. An anti-posture appeared to be a provisory and often unsatisfying solution to this ambivalence. Those writers who adopted a personal posture in the final decades of the eighteenth century rejected this compromise outright, denounced the hesitations of the Enlightenment, associated anonymity with cowardice and constructed a more outspoken polemical vocation.[15]

Late eighteenth-century pamphleteers like Paine or Gouges developed a polemical style characterized by a combination of personal exposure and moral rigorism. In order to comprehend this phenomenon, some scholars have recently turned to the Greek concept of *parrhesia*, and in particular to its use by Michel Foucault. While Foucault's earlier article on authorship, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?," had rather limited the role of the writer, his late work (at least in a certain way) introduced a stronger, even transgressive author figure. In the early 1980s, he became interested in intellectual postures and turned to ancient Greece, and figures such as Socrates or Diogenes of Sinope, to examine a very particular form of intellectual vocation that associated the need to tell truth to power with the incurrence of personal risk. *Parrhesia* literally translates as "the courage to tell the truth."[16] Based on Foucault, scholars have discovered a proliferation of references to ancient gestures of *parrhesia* and a frequent invocation of courageous Greek thinkers such as Socrates by eighteenth-century writers. In fact, personal pamphleteering, in a break with the Enlightenment, was broadly based on this gesture.

Paine or Gouges went public full of confidence, signed their publications, and emphasized their dedication to truth and their readiness to face whatever prosecution might be out there.[17] Just consider this tirade in a pamphlet published by Gouges in 1793:

> Are you looking for the primary culprit? It is me; strike. It was me who, in my officious defense of Louis Capet, preached, as a true republican, the clemency of the victors for a dethroned tyrant; it was me who gave the idea of appealing to the people; it was me who wanted, by this great measure, to break all the scepters, to regenerate the peoples, and to dry up the rivers of blood which have been flowing since that time for this cause. This is my crime, Frenchmen, it is time to expiate it in the midst of the executioners.[18]

15 Robert Darnton: "The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France", in: *Past & Present* 51/1 (1971), pp. 81–115; Antoine Lilti: "Reconnaissance et célébrité: Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la politique du nom propre", in: *Orages: Littérature et culture* 9 (2010), pp. 77–94.

16 See Michel Foucault: *Le gouvernement de soi et des autres: Cours au Collège de France, 1982–1983*, Paris: Hautes Études (2008); Michel Foucault: *Le courage de la vérité: Le gouvernement de soi et des autres II: Cours au Collège de France, 1984*, Paris: Hautes Études (2009); Michel Foucault: *Fearless Speech*, ed. by Joseph Pearson, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) (2001).

17 See e.g., Louisa Shea: *The Cynic Enlightenment: Diogenes in the Salon*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (2010); Antoine Lilti: *L'héritage des Lumières: ambivalences de la modernité*, Paris: Hautes Études (2019), ch. IX.

18 Olympe de Gouges: *Testament politique d'Olympe de Gouges*, Paris (1793), p. 4.

Such an ostentatious brand of courage could be risky. But it also had two considerable advantages. The first was that it presented a way to force at least some sort of reaction from the authorities. They could and indeed often did prefer to ignore pseudonymous pamphlets authored by well-connected Enlightenment writers, but they *had to* deal with authors like Paine or Gouges who openly paraded their willingness to face prosecution. The second consequence was that *parrhesia* functioned particularly well in a new setting of intensified mediated communication. Paine became a popular figure not only because his arguments had such great appeal, but also because his personal attacks on high-profile politicians were of particular interest to a growing public of print consumers. Gouges was far less successful, but also encountered a variety of affirmative as well as critical reactions to her spectacular performances as a writer.

A heroic interpretation of personal polemical writing ignores the fact that it had actually been fairly ambivalently interpreted in the eighteenth century itself. It could certainly be read as the authentic expression of an inner vocation, but also as the downside of the recent spread of cheap printing and the logic of the marketplace. The Enlightenment had conceived of mediated communication as a vehicle for general emancipation by means of rational discussion. But what if pamphlet controversies became boxing matches, and pamphleteers turned into prize fighters throwing punches under the curious gaze of a public of consumers, as the *Tableau de Paris* worried in 1788?

> Boxers. We do not have among us those tough champions with closed fists, who strike deadly blows, but we can nevertheless be sure that this or that figure will be eager to fight this or that other; it almost becomes inevitable: because of pamphlets. The public, which requires emotions of all kinds, likes these kinds of fights. It likes to see writers clash; it animates them, it excites them to war; it enjoys the blows they deal each other [...] Yes, we have boxers among us, as they do on the banks of the river Thames, & the names of these champions are so well known, that even children cite them. [...] [T]he two champions clash violently, ink & insults flow freely: the public laughs at the expense of the combatants, who end up covering themselves with ridicule, for that is the currency with which it is accustomed to pay the foolish self-esteem of these pen & paper warriors.[19]

Contemporaries regularly complained that the new champions of personal polemical writing resorted to simplifications, stereotypes, emotions, and entertainment rather than engaging in discussions about political content. Or rather, as some realized, the two were intertwined to a frustrating degree. How to distinguish, they wondered, between necessary criticism and useless polemical spectacle?

19 *Tableau de Paris*, vol. XI, Amsterdam (1788), pp. 161–164.

PARASITES

Nowadays, the birth of the modern author has a bad reputation. The strong affirmation of the author as creator of thought and beauty represents a cultural stereotype of individualist modernity that has neglected its own conditions: mechanisms such as printing and editing, craftsmen and experts such as booksellers or peddlers, and the collective production of discourse. Somewhat unexpectedly, the collectivist communication strategy of the Enlightenment seems almost realistic in this regard. In contrast, heroic pamphlet authorship looks particularly presumptuous. When pamphleteers such as Paine and Gouges proudly printed their names on their books, it might be argued that they were strategically crafting a public image that emphasized their own importance whereas their actual contribution was in reality far less significant than they claimed. Their posture, in this light, was part of a parasitical practice that extracted public reputation and money from a system of political communication that was actually nourished by the contributions of others.[20]

But a bold, personal posture *had* consequences. Consider an image that illustrated Gouges's advocacy of patriotic gifts to cover the French debt in late 1788 and early 1789. It suggested that Gouges herself, who can be seen in the middle carrying a basket on her back, was not only the mastermind behind the initiative, but had herself donated the largest sum. The image can also be read as a self-selected representation of the author figure she sought to promote in her pamphlets: feminine, patriotic, self-confident, but also, in her very expressiveness, selfless. For Gouges, this posture became an important justification for going public, a vehicle for her particular style of political engagement. On closer inspection, the opposition between self-promotion on the one hand and a serious intellectual and political purpose on the other is often quite difficult to maintain.

An expressive posture probably *was* parasitical. That, however, does not mean that it was devoid of intended and unintended usages.[21] A pamphlet with or without the name of the author on the title page, with or without a personal preface could be used and abused in quite different ways, as contemporaries were often able to perceive. Printers and booksellers could capitalize on a famous name by publishing and republishing pamphlets, replies, caricatures, and the like. Other writers could refer to Paine or Gouges, using them as publicity for their own productions, issue their own opinions on their opinions, or even publicly discuss their biographies. Readers could laugh about pamphleteers who made fools of themselves or despise them for their immodesty. They could admire them, hang their printed portraits over their beds, and elect them to the National Assembly. They could also identify with the personal experiences Paine or Gouges discussed so extensively, nourishing their own political identities through their reading, using the personal posture of pamphleteers to progressively replace the subservience of the royal subject with the polemical stance of the citizen.

20 A good entry: Dustin H. Griffin: *Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century*, Newark: University of Delaware Press (2013).

21 Michel Serres: *Le Parasite*, Paris: Grasset (1980).



2 *Projet de l'impôt patriotique, donné par Mad. de Gouges, dans le mois de sept.re 1788*, [Paris] ([1789]), Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

SHORT-CIRCUITING PUBLICITY

NILS C. KUMKAR





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Nils C. Kumkar: "Short-Circuiting Publicity", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 39–50.

Is there a crisis of truth? Do we still live in a shared reality or do we now live in a fragmented public of isolated filter bubbles? Has critique run out of steam or is the fact-checker the critic's newest incarnation? The epistemological questions around the phenomenon of so-called "alternative facts" raised in the academic and broader public alike could hardly be more fundamental. The following essay does not set out to answer them; rather, it considers the very profundity of these questions: What is it that is so deeply irritating about alternative facts?

I begin with a reading of Bruno Latour's "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?,"[1] his urtext on critique and its discontents in light of what is known as the "post-truth condition," arguing that this talk came to have a profound influence on subsequent discussions of alternative facts because he conceptualized them as being a form of critique, which foreshadowed critical social science's unease vis-à-vis alternative facts.

Developing a more media-centered sociological perspective on the problem of comparing the two types of "critique," I further delineate this supposed functional equivalence of classical critique in the form of the pamphlet and the new type of critique, alternative facts, as two ways of communicatively challenging the *reality of reality.*[2] I argue that the pamphlet has to be understood as an element of the figuration of *activist-pamphlet-public,* in which the activist is rooted in counterpublics but established in a specific social role by entering into the public via the pamphlet (and vice versa). Building on my empirical and theoretical research on the communicative function of alternative facts,[3] this essay will then argue that social media has blurred the demarcation that had hitherto stood for the politicization of communication. By short-circuiting everyday communication with public discourse, it has simultaneously politicized quasi-private and milieu-specific vernacular forms of interaction and depoliticized public acts of "speaking up."

Following this observation, the article will develop a new perspective on the phenomenon of alternative facts as a symptom of the structural transformation of the public sphere. While it is often assumed that alternative facts are able to flourish due to the intransparency of social media communication, whether due to algorithmically curated radicalization trajectories, filter bubbles, or a lack of media competency,[4] this article takes the opposite stance. I argue that it is precisely the transparency of social media discourse, in which everything is potentially the object of public discourse and therefore must be assumed to be known, that makes

1 Bruno Latour: "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern", in: *Critical Inquiry* 2/30 (2004), pp. 225–248.

2 Luc Boltanski: *Soziologie und Sozialkritik: Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen 2008*, Berlin: Suhrkamp (2010), p. 152.

3 Nils C. Kumkar: *Alternative Fakten: Zur Praxis der kommunikativen Erkenntnisverweigerung*, Berlin: Suhrkamp (2022).

4 A very illustrative example of these – often implicit – assumptions concerning the causes of the contemporary pathologies of public discourse are Habermas's recent writings, which simply assume them to be driving the "new structural transformation of the public sphere." Jürgen Habermas: "Überlegungen und Hypothesen zu einem erneuten Strukturwandel der politischen Öffentlichkeit", in: *Ein neuer Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit?*, ed. by Martin Seeliger, Sebastian Sevignani, Baden-Baden: Nomos (2021), pp. 470–500.

the articulation of alternative facts an expedient and probable strategy for getting around inconvenient truths. Confronted with a construction of reality that is in many senses more solid and far-reaching than ever before, they allow a ducking out of antagonistic normative conflicts in which one would be on the losing side if the shared factual basis of conflict were to be validated by both parties. In this sense, the much-proclaimed era of "post-truth" is not so much a crisis of truth, but rather a crisis of public discourse which, at the very moment when its ideals of transparency and synchronicity of communication seem within reach, encounters the limits of understanding.

CRITIQUE'S DISCONTENT

The election of Donald Trump as the 45th U.S. president in 2016, together with what is commonly referred to as the Brexit referendum, sent shockwaves through the political discourse. And one important reason for this was that the blatant disregard that Trump and the Brexiteers showed for the facticity of their statements, a disregard that had been widely criticized and ridiculed, failed to hinder their success. Could it even be that their insistence on alternative facts not only did not hinder, but in fact allowed them to win? How to argue with (or about) truth claims that fly in the face of what in the public discourse is commonly assumed, scientifically validated, and institutionally authorized – such as insisting that Barack Obama was not born in the USA, even when his birth certificate is in the public domain, that the very existence of climate change is scientifically controversial, or that Donald Trump's inauguration ceremony drew the largest crowds ever recorded?

Bruno Latour's *Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?,* a talk held more than a decade before the discourse on alternative facts peaked with the election of Donald Trump, became one of the most-cited articles in the debate on post-truth and alternative facts. It is plausible to assume that this has less to do with its philosophical niceties or its suggested ways forward, and more to do with its diagnosis of the problem itself: "the danger [is] no longer [...] coming from an excessive confidence in ideological arguments posturing as matters of fact – as we have learned to combat so efficiently in the past – but from an excessive *distrust* of good matters of fact disguised as bad ideological biases!"[5] Critique ran out of steam because it became universalized, because it is aimed at critics and their "good matters of fact." Latour thereby identified a key problem in the debate surrounding alternative facts – not only a decade early but also in a manner more theoretically nuanced than many versions of this argument developed since then. It is therefore worthwhile, and not only because of this text's prominence, to address its argument in a little more detail.

The essay's starting point is that what we would now call alternative facts – in Latour's case: the 9/11 Truth movement and climate change denial – could

5 Latour: "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" (2004), p. 227.

be read as critique. It is this formal homology between the *problem* of so-called "post-truth" and the very *solution* that critiques of ideology once offered that allowed the old front lines of the science wars to be re-established in the debates on social constructivism and alternative facts. Unlike more polemical versions of the argument, Latour does not blame expanding skepticism toward the basic concept of a shared understanding of reality on "postmodernity". He does, however, discern a problem in the fact that the duo of social criticism and skepticism seem to share a similar form. The solution for him is to shift the register of critique itself – away from "matters of fact" and toward "matters of concern."

There is a certain hastiness in this homogenization of alternative facts and other forms of social critique with regard to their actual form – but perhaps an even more striking consideration concerns how we are even able to tell them apart in order to compare them in the first place. As already indicated in the sentence cited above, the rise of alternative facts is presented as the rise of "bad" critique, which first and foremost signifies critique employed by the wrong party. The whole talk is permeated with martial metaphorics.[6] For example, Latour speaks of alternative facts as "weapons smuggled through a fuzzy border to the wrong party"[7] but he is suspiciously silent on what defines the parties at war, aside from fighting each other. The talk seems to simply take it as given that the reader will implicitly understand whom he is talking about when he refers to "us" and "them," those who traditionally did the critiquing and those who now deploy these weapons against "us," loosely coupled with the political "left" and "right" (concepts never mentioned in the text) through the examples offered, and perhaps it has to remain obscure since it is the blind spot of the observation itself: Because its key distinction is the distinction of us vs. them, the shift of our weaponry into the wrong hands, this distinction cannot itself be meaningfully observed.

Yet this is somewhat unsatisfying for it begs the question as to why the problem identified is a *problem* at all: why should we redesign our weaponry just because the enemy has started to deploy it as well? Should this not – to stick to the martial vocabulary – mainly be a question of firepower? If the enemy uses it as well, could this not very well be a compliment being paid to the armorer?

A more promising indication of what could help us to get beyond this somewhat stale and decisionist differentiation of us vs. them is an observation in the text that is more formal in nature. Occasionally, Latour seems to reserve the concept of critique proper for us, as in when he speaks of alternative facts as a form of "instant revisionism"[8] and not of instant criticism, or when he speaks of conspiracy theories as bearing "our trademark: *Made in Criticalland*,"[9] indicating that they are not really to be understood as truly critical critique, but rather as criticism re-aimed at critique itself (what else could it mean if the weaponry bearing

6 In an interview with *Science* in 2017, he doubles down on this martial rhetoric, insisting that "we are indeed at war." See: Jop Vrieze: "Bruno Latour, a Veteran of the 'Science Wars,' Has a New Mission", in: *Science*, www.science.org/content/article/bruno-latour-veteran-science-wars-has-new-mission (October 10, 2017).

7 Latour: "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" (2004), p. 230.

8 Latour: "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" (2004), p. 228.

9 Latour: "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" (2004), p. 230.

this trademark is smuggled into enemy territory, which consequently is not "criticalland"), or when he introduces his idea of "matters of concern" by identifying it as "the next task for the critically minded."[10]

If we follow this lead, (and this essay contends that we should), this necessarily entails a shift of perspective. Instead of asking how one ought to reformulate the concept of critique in order for it to be clearly set apart from the critique that the bad guys are using, we should ask how critique is transformed when it has apparently changed hands. Can we formulate a distinction between what is idealized as the true, *critical critique* of yesteryear and the *uncritical critique* that is the object of our current concerns?

To differentiate between the two forms of critique, I would like to consult yet another French theorist of critique who – also prior to the official onset of public panic about alternative facts – investigated the formal affinities between critical social theory and conspiracy theories, albeit principally in the guise of fiction. According to Luc Boltanski, the function of conspiracies in spy novels is the "*construction of reality*."[11] Thus, conspiracy theories (which, by definition, take a critical stance toward the conspiracies they are theorizing about, which sets them apart from beliefs in benevolent hidden actors like Santa Claus, his elves and their collusion with parents) aim at deconstructing reality, which is precisely what Boltanski defines as the function of criticism: to question the reality of reality itself. Unlike Latour, however, he presents us with a more nuanced sociological concept of what he understands as reality: an institutionalized account of "what is the case" – a necessary precondition of coordinating actions and interpretations of the "world" in complex, differentiated societies, while the world, nonetheless, is always exceeding this very reality.

Both conspiracy theories and detective stories take this excess as their starting point whenever seemingly nonsensical "events" challenge our perception of reality. However, while the latter sets out to "repair reality" by dint of interpretation (the detective undertakes to solve the case, thereby re-inscribing the nonsensical event, qua re-interpretation, into our concept of reality), the conspiracy theory plays (more or less joyfully) with the possibility of reality itself being the "crime," something that is made up in order to cover up a truer, more basic reality. Thus, in both cases, the reality of reality is called into question. In one case, however, we end up with a richer, more elaborate understanding of reality, while in the other, we end up with a reality whose reality status is called into question. Even if one insists on calling what happens in both genres "critique," one would nonetheless have to concede that they are very different forms of critique.

PAMPHLETS AND INTELLECTUALS

I will now take up two very subtle hints from Latour's talk – namely that alternative facts seem to function as a kind of "instant revisionism," might be "miniaturized

10 Latour: "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" (2004), p. 232.
11 Luc Boltanski: *Rätsel und Komplotte: Kriminalliteratur, Paranoia, moderne Gesellschaft*,

like computers have," and that they resemble a popularized form of criticism.[12] Although these indications should not be taken at face value (good criticism is slow, handwritten, and academically educated), they do lead us to ask important sociological questions, namely concerning the (medial and communicative) form through which criticism is articulated and the kind of social role that is associated with writing critique.

For Boltanski, the archetypal example of the critic challenging the reality of reality is the *pamphleteer*. His pamphlets are "messages in a bottle," addressed to the public, deriving their authority from the pamphleteers' subjective experience, which is summoned to confront the reality of the institutions.[13] In other words, the pamphleteers are intellectuals-as-critics, engaged in a very peculiar act of translation: they transform elements of their experience into a problem of institutional reality by proposing it to be a matter of public concern. It is not just that their subjective experience is unacknowledged in public discourse, but that their subjective experience bears witness to an aspect of the world that is barred from the reality constructed in this discourse – which makes the pamphlet potentially explosive criticism.

This form of critique is therefore intimately intertwined with the ascent of mass media and the establishment of "the public" as an arena in which the reality of reality can be meaningfully problematized. Yet the public also depends on this very reality of reality, making it as much the object as it is the audience of the intervention of the pamphleteers. They can only be pamphleteers by referring to an "outside" of this very public for which they are raising their voice – and be it only by lending their voice to a postulated "party itself," the "specter" of which is haunting public imagination, as the Manifesto of the Communist Party declares in its famous opening stanzas.[14] In this sense, pamphleteering is a liminal practice, and the constellation of the pamphlet and the intellectual constitutes a form of structural coupling of the mass-media public and its environment that allows for the reality construction of the former to be productively irritated by the latter. It is a significant part of the work of the "detectives" of the critical social sciences, among others, to take up the challenges raised by pamphlets and to reintegrate them into the social self-image of the institutionalized construction of reality.

Using the pragmatist-Hegelian vocabulary developed by American philosopher Robert Brandom, we can understand critique in this sense as social inquiry, as a form of developing and bettering the institutionalized representation (reality) of the world via the experience of error.[15] The pamphleteer "makes public" what has hitherto not been integrated into the realm of the real, thereby creating an incompatibility, and public discourse reacts by processing this incompatibility as conflict. The pamphleteering event is therefore the collaborative, social process-

Berlin: Suhrkamp (2013), p. 301, translation NK, emphasis in the original.

12 Latour: "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?" (2004), p. 228ff.

13 Boltanski: *Soziologie und Sozialkritik* (2010), p. 152, translation NK.

14 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: "Manifest der kommunistischen Partei", in: *MEW (Marx-Engels-Werke)*, vol. 4, Berlin: Dietz (1960 [1848]), pp. 459–493, p. 461.

15 See Robert B. Brandom: *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (2019), pp. 63–106.

ing of the irritation caused by public discourse: pamphleteers and experts, organic and traditional intellectuals, critics and scientists – all these figurations capture the political and epistemological processing of irritation-as-conflict. How this conflict is resolved, of course, is a contingent question that rests on, amongst other things, the ability of the institutions to process irritation, the legitimacy the pamphleteers can mobilize for their truth claims, and the public's capacity to "forget" conflict. In principle, the pamphlet can just as well be forgotten as it can shatter the very foundation of reality or trigger only marginal changes. But it is critique in a meaningful sense precisely because it contains the potential for a transformation of reality that hinges on two very basic systemic conditions: an integrated public and the possibility of this integrated public's discourse to process its relationship with its environment via the re-entry of so-called "counterpublics."

ANTI-CRITIQUE

It may at first seem as if identifying this basic structure is an empty theoretical exercise; after all, did I not reproduce exactly the standard description of alternative facts? Elements of alternative reality constructions, created and validated in self-affirming filter bubbles and transposed into public discourse, where they challenge the established wisdom of scientific or social truth? Have I not simply replicated Latour's dilemma of critique in the wrong hands? My research on alternative facts has led me to a different conclusion: measured against this basic structure of critique as social inquiry, alternative facts are not the functional equivalents of pamphlets in the sense outlined above. Contrary to what Latour leads us to believe, alternative facts are not critique in the wrong hands – indeed they are not critique at all. And this also allows us to point out differences in how critique and alternative facts relate to their respective communicative "infrastructures."

We might begin with the function of critique as precipitating social inquiry via the process of error. Whatever example we choose from the multitude of alternative facts that have plagued the political discourse in the last decades, none of them has substantially altered our understanding of the reality they explicitly challenged.[16] The practical consensus on the reality of climate change has not been adapted or abandoned because of the "reports" of the Non-Governmental International Panel on Climate Change (one of the most vocal contrarian organizations set up to counteract the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). We do not now know that Donald Trump's inauguration ceremony drew more participants than originally reported. Donald Trump did lose the presidential election in 2020 and even those journalists who reported sympathetically on his claim that the election was "stolen" now seem to have always known that this was not the case.[17] The Coronavirus was not the influenza virus of 2020. The US

16 Of course, they altered implicit assumptions about reality, such as the widespread illusion of an expertocratic transfer of knowledge from science to politics, but this is not due to their form as critique and can therefore be ignored.

17 Stuart A. Thompson, Karen Yourish, Jeremy W. Peters: "What Fox News Hosts Said

government did not blow up the Twin Towers in 2001. We can observe in the mid-term that neither scientific nor political discourse incorporated any of those alternative truth claims as reality in the sense outlined above, even as an explicated and relevant possibility.

From this perspective, the over-hastiness of Latour's homogenization of alternative facts and critique consists in the ignoring of their respective processual quality as communicative phenomena. If we focus not only on what is said, but on what difference saying this makes in its respective communicative context, the difference between the two genres becomes apparent – and this difference does not have to rely on identifying them with any political party. It is true, on the level of their explicit propositional content, that both alternative facts and critique do challenge the reality of reality. However, while the latter dynamizes reality in the sense of a social inquiry, the former seems to do the exact opposite: they – for the moment – stall the processing of irritating information. Upon closer inspection, it is a shared property of all the alternative facts mentioned thus far that they are not so much about "what happened" as about "what *did not* happen": man-made climate change, terrorists attacking the United States, a small crowd gathering at the inauguration ceremony, the deselection of Donald Trump, a pandemic plaguing the world, etc.

They may be highly irritating because they are incompatible with the inferences of institutionalized reality construction and, if followed through, would have catastrophic consequences for this reality construction: the laws of physics would probably have to be reformulated, the electoral system of the USA would be corrupt beyond repair, the newsrooms of almost all media would have to be restaffed – but claims that those measures are necessary are barely heard beyond fringe conspiracy theory sects and the populist rumblings of election campaigns.[18] These consequences are "theoretical" in the colloquial sense of the word – and it is a rather typical example of *scholastic fallacy*[19] to conclude that any actor suggests enacting those consequences practically, simply because (s)he articulated those claims.

Alternative facts have a rather conservative direct impact: not only do they not challenge reality in the sense of a lasting impact on its inferential structure, but they in fact cushion reality against the changes implied by the very fact those alternative facts are denying. We might, for the moment, ignore the fact that Trump was only elected by a small minority and not carried into office by a populist mass movement, laying bare both the vanity of his self-portrayal as a populist leader and the capacity of the electoral system to produce such a freak outcome. Or we might for now ignore the fact that addressing climate change would call for dra-

Privately vs. Publicly About Voter Fraud", in: *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/02/25/business/media/fox-news-dominion-tucker-carlson.html (February 25, 2023).

18 In those instances, however, the catastrophic nature of the consequences to be enacted is a function of the articulation of the alternative facts – here, their actual propositional content becomes secondary to their mobilizing and socializing the affects of the "great awakening" celebrated on those occasions.

19 Pierre Bourdieu: *Meditationen: Zur Kritik der scholastischen Vernunft*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (2001).

matic economic restructuring (at least), paradoxically comforted by the fact that "one does not really know." We might rightfully shy away from radical measures aimed at curbing the spread of Coronavirus because evidence as to the relative impact of different measures and the lethality of the virus is still ambiguous, etc.

And this can be observed not only from the perspective of their discursive functioning – after all, one could easily claim that the majority of pamphlets and other criticisms have just as little impact on the social construction of reality: they are simply relegated to the dustbin of historical debates, waiting to be re-actualized or simply forgotten. But unlike in the case of alternative facts, this is not a defining feature of pamphlets; rather it just means that they have failed or their moment has passed. Once we are sensitized to this aspect of the communicative form of alternative facts, it becomes apparent even on the level of the articulated propositional content of alternative facts. I would like to illustrate this using the very prominent example that gave the phenomenon its name.

In a press briefing on January 17, 2021, press secretary Sean Spicer disputed media reports of a relatively small crowd being present at Donald Trump's inauguration ceremony.[20] A day later, Kellyanne Conway, an advisor to Trump, gave an interview to NBC News in which she pushed back against the question as to why Spicer had made misleading claims about the size of the crowd, insisting that he had not lied, but rather that he had presented alternative facts, and the rest is history. The rather spontaneous coinage of a neologism[21] "ushered in the era of 'alternative facts'."[22]

The memory of this press briefing is shaped by the press reaction to it, which was mainly to refute its content as lies,[23] glossing over the very peculiar form in which these "lies" were presented. Therefore, let me briefly sum up what Spicer said with regard to the crowd size at the inauguration.[24]

First, the problem he seeks to address is formulated as follows: "photographs of the inaugural proceedings were intentionally framed in a way, in one particular tweet, to minimize the enormous support that had gathered on the National Mall." For Spicer, the object of contention is therefore not a concrete number to be contested, but rather the supposed downplaying of support.

Second, and more importantly for the purpose of this essay, the way he processes this problem also indicates that arguing about the actual crowd size is but

20 For a more detailed discussion of the incident, see: Kumkar: *Alternative Fakten* (2022), pp. 48–58.

21 Kellyanne Conway retrospectively tried to walk back on it, minimizing its meaning to that of a different perspective on shared facts, like the question of whether a glass of water is half full or half empty. See Olivia Nuzzi: "Kellyanne Conway Is a Star", in: *New York Magazine*, www.nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/03/kellyanne-conway-trumps-first-lady.html (March 18, 2017).

22 Rebecca Sinderbrand: "How Kellyanne Conway Ushered in the Era of 'Alternative Facts'", in: *Washington Post*, www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/01/22/how-kellyanne-conway-ushered-in-the-era-of-alternative-facts/ (January 22, 2017).

23 e.g., Jill Abramson: "'Alternative Facts' Are Just Lies, Whatever Kellyanne Conway Claims", in: *The Guardian*, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/23/kellyanne-conway-alternative-facts-lies (January 24, 2017).

24 This is based on the Politico transcript of the press briefing, see: "Transcript of White House Press Secretary Statement to the Media", in: *Politico (blog)*, www.politico.com/story/2017/01/transcript-press-secretary-sean-spicer-media-233979 (January 21, 2017).

one way to address *this* problem. Concretely, he makes the following claims: (1) white floor coverings made the crowd seem smaller than in previous inaugurations; (2) fences and metal detectors used at the entrances kept many people from entering the Mall; (3) no one has any reliable numbers on the attendance; (4) indicators one could use as proxies for crowd size actually suggest a comparatively large inauguration; (5) "This was the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration – period – both in person and around the globe." Or in short: (1) the crowd only looked small; (2) the crowd was small for a good reason; (3) we do not know how big it was; (4) we guess it was big; (5) it was the biggest crowd ever.

It is obvious that these statements can hardly be considered to constitute a consistent proposition about the crowd size at the inauguration – indeed they blatant contradict one another. The only possible proposition that could integrate all these statements coherently would be "it was the biggest crowd in history, even though we cannot put out a definite number and it might have been even bigger were it not for adverse circumstances." Yet, such an "overdone" proposition only really makes sense if we consider it to be a rebuff to the complex statement "the crowd was small and this shows the lack of support for the president." In this light, all elements of the chain of statements address the elements of this sentence: it is wrong because the number only appeared small. It is wrong because there is more support than the number would suggest. You don't have any numbers supporting your claim. Your claim is wrong because the crowd was, in fact, bigger than "yours." The speaker does not take responsibility for the truth values of any of those claims – unlike pamphleteers, who invest the statement delivered with their own authority, the alternative fact-er focuses on disputing the legitimacy of those presenting the original fact in question.

DISCURSIVE OPACITY

Alternative facts are not critique in the sense of social inquiry but rather they constitute a form of communicative denial. They do not challenge reality by introducing a truth claim that reality cannot easily digest, but rather they challenge exactly those kinds of truth claims. Not only does this functionalist definition permit a refutation of the homogenization of critique and alternative facts, (and I presented Bruno Latour's speech at Stanford as one of the more nuanced examples of this), but it also permits the development of some (admittedly very general) hypotheses on the changing structure of the public, which has allowed this form to gain such prominence in discourse. For I would argue that it is not so much that critique is a weapon that has been smuggled across the border. Critique, particularly in the emblematic case of the pamphlet, has always been a weapon used by all political parties, with the pamphleteer even having a tendency to tilt to the right.[25] And nor is it that critique has run out of steam – pamphlets do still exist; it may be rare for criticism to be consequential, but there is no reason to believe

25 Boltanski: *Soziologie und Sozialkritik* (2010), p. 152.

that it is less consequential than in days past. It is rather the case that alternative facts have become an increasingly probable and visible part of the repertoire of discourse *around* critique because of changes in the (infra)structure of the public. In what remains of this essay, I would like to sketch out this counterintuitive relationship, which runs against the standard narrative of "bots, bubbles and fools" that is often employed for explaining alternative facts.

So let us return for a moment to the basic structural problem that the pamphlet is addressing. It challenges reality by introducing an indigestible element into it, a stumbling block that necessitates the reformulation of the inferential structures of reality construction (if it cannot be ignored, which is the more probable scenario). The activists/intellectuals are therefore involved in a liminal practice of translation: they transform private or subaltern knowledge into an object of public discourse. This necessitates the existence of a public for which this translation is performed and which reacts to it – and whose attention toward the subject matter exerts pressure on the institutions involved in constructing social reality. Zola's *J'Accuse!* functions as a pamphlet because its publication implies it will be read by people whose opinion on the subject matter is important for the legitimacy of the Dreyfus case. On the other hand, in order to exert pressure on the public, the authors of the pamphlet have to somehow acquire the authority of someone who is to be listened to. This is usually done by performing a representative function with regard to a counterpublic, a group whose shared, yet hitherto publicly unacknowledged knowledge is made public by the pamphleteers: by claiming to speak for a group, by speaking the group into existence (as the Manifesto of the Communist Party turns a specter into a real movement) or by collecting signatures/supporters.

Alternative facts have become more prominent because this liminal position of translating between counterpublic and public, between latent knowledge and explicit discourse, has lost relative importance. This is not because society has fragmented into filter bubbles,[26] but because public discourse is more integrated than ever. "We are spared nothing, not even being informed about it all," as the invisible committee put it in their pamphlet *now*.[27] This integration poses a problem for public discourse because it has made it increasingly unlikely that unsolvable problems can be postponed by de-thematizing them: everyone can be expected to have seen the pictures of the modest crowd at the inauguration, to know about man-made climate change, the dangers of Coronavirus, etc. Yet, the conflicts surrounding this information are too tense to be resolved, and thus they are transformed into conflicts about *belief* in the facticity of the information itself. This is not done primarily by proposing a different fact, a determinate negation, of what the case is supposed to be, but simply by insisting that other people believe different things. Donald Trump's team knew perfectly well that the public had seen the picture of the small crowd at the inauguration ceremony and that the very

26 Early on, researchers pointed out that the empirical evidence for filter bubbles having any relevant impact on opinion formation is rather weak: see Frederik Zuiderveen Borgesius, Damian Trilling, Judith Moeller, Balázs Bodó, Claes H. Vreese, Natali Helberger: "Should We Worry About Filter Bubbles?", in: *Internet Policy Review: Journal on Internet Regulation* 5/1, https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2758126 (2016).

27 The Invisible Committee: *Now*, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) (2017).

fact of a small inauguration ceremony would be read as a sign of the president's lack of support. Which is precisely why they had to react. And it was only because they could not undo the publishing of the picture, which had already circulated around the world at the very moment they learned of it, that they had to raise suspicions about whether it had captured the reality of the ceremony correctly. Alternative facts are thus self-induced opacity in public discourse: they react to what is already publicly known not by making something else known, but by "turning up the noise."

From this perspective, we can gain some insight into why knowledge-centered approaches to counter alternative facts necessarily run into obstacles and why they are so profoundly irritating when it comes to public discourse. Since alternative facts do not bear witness to a lack of available knowledge but, on the contrary, react to an excess of "inconvenient truth," their functioning is not blocked but, in many cases, ironically, enhanced by attempts to refute them. "To regain some of the authority of science"[28] leads nowhere, because the authority of science is not what is in dispute. By unmasking the claims with regard to the crowd size at Donald Trump's inauguration as lies, discourse shifts – from the topic of the legitimacy of a president elected by a minority of the population to the question of the facticity of expressed beliefs in crowd sizes, even though it is highly doubtful that a significant number of people do in fact believe the false claims raised.[29]

And this is exactly what is so profoundly irritating about alternative facts: because they prove immune to being refuted qua argument and their function even thrives on attempts to refute them, they challenge the very self-idealization of public discourse as deliberative. Successfully confronting alternative facts is therefore not a matter of confronting them as false facts to be refuted, but of fighting one's case in the conflict that gave rise to them.

28 Vrieze: "Veteran of the 'Science Wars'" (2017).

29 Brian F. Schaffner, Samantha Luks: "Misinformation or Expressive Responding? What an Inauguration Crowd Can Tell Us about the Source of Political Misinformation in Surveys", in: *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82/1 (2018), pp. 135–147.

CIRCULATIONS

SAKINA SHAKIL GRÖPPMAIER





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier: "Circulations", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 51–64.

TEXT, EVENT, TEXT

Text plays a powerful role in sociopolitical relationships, particularly when concerted efforts for paradigmatic change are underway. This is evident in contemporary territorialist movements in the political West, which seek to transform geopolitical borders as we know them. These movements pursue change in places where democratic structures are foundational to political governance and in such places, the people have collective power. This power has various grades and limitations, but paradigmatic change can be induced by a single event if this collective power is effectively exercised. In the West, this often means in the form of a vote, organized by those in governing positions, campaigned for by interest-driven actors, and carried through by the collective public. This is where text serves as a crucial mediator.

This paper highlights the mediating role of text in contemporary territorialist movements – the kinds of text that are produced in efforts towards paradigmatic change and the discursive relationships they initiate. Herein, the focus lies on conditions and content: the conditions in which text-mediated relationships develop and the literary qualities that shape them. It is these qualities that determine the efficacy of political text and how productively it circulates in discursive arenas, and lay the foundation for how such discursive relationships ultimately function. I argue that efficacious political text takes on qualities of the pamphlet, and pamphletary claims allow political actors and engaged publics to construct discursive circulations that create potential for major paradigmatic change.

What I mean by the pamphletary is this: affective, politically partisan literature that seeks to persuade the reader in taking a definitive stance, and that is defined not just by its content but by the engagement it receives in the public sphere.[1] A text, thus, is not made pamphletary by its author; it is made pamphletary by the dialogical process it sets in motion.[2] To set such a process in motion, it's claims must affect its reader, eliciting emotions that motivate response,[3] and ultimately, generate forms of political participation that are fueled by discursive contributions. To be pamphletary is, as a text and its claims, to be alive and in circulations, and thus to hinge this life temporally. These circulations assign forms of agency to the texts themselves, and such texts can develop the potential to metamorphose into agents of major change. Political pamphletary text can be centered on a real-world event, making the circulations of the pamphletary an event in

1 In identifying the pamphletary in political literature, I rely (in part) on bringing together Brian Massumi's Spinozist notion of "affect as the power to 'affect and be affected'" and Sara Ahmed's ideas on how being emotional "is to have one's judgement affected," "to be reactive rather than active, and to be dependent rather than autonomous." See: Brian Massumi: *Politics of Affect*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2015), p. ix; Sarah Ahmed: *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (2004), p. 3.

2 My concept of the pamphletary is based on the taxonomic criteria underlying Pierre-Héli Monot's redefinition of a pamphlet. See Pierre-Héli Monot: "Art, Autonomy, Philology: Research Parameters," in this volume.

3 Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, Francesca Poletta: "Why Emotions Matter", in: *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. by Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, Francesca Poletta, Chicago: Chicago University Press (2001), pp. 1–26, p. 8.

itself. Its pamphletary qualities are made most visible by the conditions of the digital public sphere, where dissemination and participation take on a visual, textual nature – writing, here, is a necessary precondition.

To explain these dimensions, I use the case of Brexit as my guiding example throughout this paper. Brexit is arguably the greatest territorialist success in the early 21st century in the West – Brexiteers managed sway the British public in voting to leave, and thus (re)installed a hard border between the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU). The Leave campaigns' pro-Brexit texts played a decisive role in the process of public persuasion, and their pamphletary qualities created affective, discursive bonds with engaged publics. Brexit is also nestled amongst a scattering of territorialist movements in the West, a phenomenon clashing with the growth of globalization which brings with it increasingly porous borders.

TERRITORIALITY AND THE PAMPHLETARY

What exactly is the relevance of territorialist movements in the relationships produced by the pamphletary? Territoriality is, broadly speaking, the desire for power over place, and plays an essential role in geographically ordering political, social, and cultural structures in the human world.[4] Territorial changes when concerning the bordering of places can be paradigmatic, changing the very structures that order our world. Territorial notions of power can be exercised in claiming contested forms of autonomy, sovereignty, secession, or independence; in the case of Brexit, these notions all overlapped.

Today, territoriality is a driving ideology behind a scattering of border-driven movements across the increasingly connected political West. Amidst the blurring of economic, security, and cultural borders and the growing porousness of national space exist territorialist movements rooted in the quest for sovereignty. Such movements take on various ideals, whether protectionist, nationalist, communalist, or an overlap of these and more. Such movements are also driven by campaigns that can be cohesive, collective, fringe, or loose in their make-up. The larger the movement, the larger the umbrella of interest groups driving associated campaigns using various ephemera to disseminate their claims, and such campaigns typically have an intended or realizable event in common. In democratic entities, this event is often a referendum.

There are several, notable examples of such movements. The Quebec sovereignty movement, for one, seeks autonomy for Quebec from Canada; it has resulted in multiple referendums, including one on seceding from Canada in 1995. The Venetist movement is a separatist movement in northern Italy and

4 For differentiated views on concepts and histories of territoriality in the human world, see: Charles Maier: *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*, Cambridge: Harvard University (2016); Stuart Elden: *The Birth of Territory*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2013); David Storey: *Territories: The Claiming of Space*, Oxon: Routledge (2001); Robert Sack: *Human Territoriality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1986).

its campaigns have resulted in unofficial referendums, including one seeking independence for its regions from Italy in 2014 and on autonomy in 2017. The California Exit movement, a non-cohesive collection of minoritarian campaigns, gained greater public attention through the Yes California independence initiative in 2016. The initiative submitted a request for a referendum to secede from the United States to the California state parliament in 2016, which never came to fruition. The Catalan Independence movement seeks sovereignty for Catalonia from Spain and held contested referendums on self-determination and independence in 2014 and 2017, respectively. Arguably the most successful of the last decades, however, is Brexit. The campaign for the UK to exit the EU has roots in Euroscepticism that long predated the UK's membership in the EU. Leading up to the EU referendum of June 23rd, 2016, in which Britons casted their vote on leaving or remaining in the EU, Brexit campaigners – also known as Brexiteers or Leavers – challenged core EU principles by disseminating affective claims that cast doubt on the EU's fiscal and mobility policies. The referendum resulted in a "Leave" vote, and the UK officially exited the EU in the years thereafter. Brexit, thus, is the movement I will be using to guide my arguments in this paper.

In the text to event to text relationship for Brexit, the EU referendum is the event at the nucleus. This referendum is the central motif of campaign claims and public engagement, and the core of the text-mediated relationship this paper focuses on. Texts distributed by the various interest groups that fell under the umbrella of the Leave campaign were of a hybrid nature – they were print, they were digital, and more often than not, they were both. The conditions created by the overlap of the real-world and the digital public sphere shaped the circulatory nature of this relationship, which was characterized by a form of content that is affective and partisan, and when most effective, agonistic in intent.[5] These qualities are what bind the discursive motions of campaign claims and responses in the public sphere. An example of this is the invocation of similar phrases – when it comes to Brexit, one of the most familiar is "take back control." The most common phrase in a relationship with a referendum at its nucleus is "vote", or "voted" post-event. These phrases tether the circulatory nature of the "text to event to text" relationship.

The invocation of specific or similar phrases is what keeps this relationship circulatory, but it is the affective and partisan qualities that characterize it as pamphletary – the texts mediating these relationships prompt affective engagement in forms of agreement and critique. Here, the way text is presented matters: the formatting, the punctuation, the visuals, and the way claims are placed – several techniques come together to further its efficaciousness. The text to event to text relationship creates circulatory discursive motions mediated by the pamphletary. Pamphletary text is meant to be interactive. It is intended to provoke agreement,

5 By agonistic, I mean the production of antagonisms and, often, hostilities in engaged publics and their respective public spheres. Here, I borrow from Chantal Mouffe's "agonistic model of democracy," in which she sees "'agonistic pluralism'", stemming from antagonisms "in human" and "social relations", as the "aim of democratic politics". See Chantal Mouffe: *The Democratic Paradox*, London: Verso (2000), p. 101.

disagreement, approval, critique, and above all, it is intended to produce a discursive response. It is intended to circulate, and in these circulations generate impetus for change. It is intended to get people talking, and in the case of the digital public sphere, to get people writing. It is intended for all this in the hope that the response generated by these circulations will develop into action, which will ultimately effect real-world change. In sum, pamphletary texts are produced with the intention of driving some specific political or social change. With regards to Brexit, the change was paradigmatic: it entailed a secession from the EU.

THE PAMPHLETARY IN TEXT

Pamphletary texts are key drivers of the circulatory relationship between political actors and publics when it comes to territorialist campaigns and the events they center. In the case of Brexit, this event was the EU Referendum of 2016, in which citizens of the UK voted to either "remain" a member of the European Union or to "leave" it. The referendum was preceded by months of intense campaigning spearheaded by two main camps: Leave and Remain. With 51.9 % of the vote, Leave won.[6]

Various interest groups were involved under the umbrella of the Leave campaign. The leading organization and official Leave campaign, *Vote Leave*, involved major public figures and politicians, including United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) party leader Nigel Farage and former London mayor and Conservative Party member (and future Prime Minister) Boris Johnson. Under the campaign umbrella, there were also associated Leave campaigns carried out by smaller interest groups like *Better Off Out*, and *Vote Leave's* primary partner and rival *Leave.EU*. *Leave.EU* had initially run against *Vote Leave* to become the official Leave campaign, but this title was awarded to *Vote Leave* by the Electoral Commission in April 2016. Both campaign groups engaged in similar forms of argumentation, incorporating affective, polemical, and sensationalist elements into their ephemera. Both *Vote Leave* and *Leave.EU* used the linchpin of migration control as a campaign claim for leaving the EU, linking it to abstract notions of sovereignty; for Leavers, exiting the EU would allow the UK to self-govern rather than be coerced into supranational policies. The migration claim would become pamphletary, the process of which would be initiated by the release of campaign materials in the public sphere.

Two campaign materials exemplify this, the first a foldout flyer produced and distributed by *Vote Leave* titled "The UK and the European Union: The Facts" and the second a double-sided flyer created by *Leave.EU* titled "It's Time to Leave!" While the aesthetic of each flyer is different, the content was analogous. *Vote Leave's* "The UK and the European Union: The Facts" comes across as a basic, neutrality-driven text. The colors are simple, a carton-light greyscale and

6 "Results and turnout at the EU referendum", in: *The Electoral Commission*, www . electoralcommission.org.uk/research-reports-and-data/our-reports-and-data-past-elections-and-referendums/results-and-turnout-eu-referendum (2024).

black and red text with a simple graphic of a ballot box on the flyer cover. The bait is "The Facts" in red – throughout the flyer, this is the color of the "facts" that are presented. The rest of the cover is bare, with the text above the main headline stating that this is "Information about the Referendum on 23 June 2016", signalling that the text is intended to be taken as an informational material rather than something conveying a politicized perspective, a campaign claim, or a partisan argument. This echoes the aesthetic throughout the flyer, signifying that it contains objective or verifiable "facts", yet providing no citation or sources as to where this data is from or how it has been collected. Although this flyer was printed and disseminated by the *Vote Leave* campaign, this is nowhere stated; it is only coded through the use of red, the most prominent color used in *Vote Leave* ephemera. The aesthetic is important, but what is essential to the pamphletary dimension are the claims made inside.



INFORMATION ABOUT THE REFERENDUM ON 23 JUNE 2016

The UK and the European Union:

THE FACTS

THE UK AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE FACTS

On 23 June, there will be a vote to decide whether the UK should remain a member of the European Union, or leave and take back control. It's a big decision – and there may not be another chance to vote for years. Here are the facts:

- **The UK joined the European Union in 1973.** Back then, it was known as the Common Market. But over the past 43 years, the EU has taken control over more and more areas which don't have anything to do with trade – such as our borders, our public services, and whether prisoners have the right to vote.
- **When we joined, there were just 9 member states.** Now there are 28, the most recent being Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia. Five more countries are being considered for membership: Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. If they are let in, they will have the same rights as other member states.
- **More than half of net migration to the UK comes from the EU.** More than a quarter of a million people came to the UK from the EU in the 12 months to September 2015 – the equivalent of a city the size of Plymouth or Newcastle in just one year.
- **While we're in the EU, the UK can't make trade deals on our own.** This means we currently have no trade deals with key allies such as Australia, New Zealand or the USA – or important growing economies like India, China or Brazil. Instead of making a deal which is best for the UK, we have to wait for 27 other countries to agree it.
- **The EU costs us £350 million a week.** That's enough to build a new NHS hospital every week of the year. We get less than half of this money back, and we have no control over the way it's spent – that's decided by politicians and officials in Brussels, rather than the people we elect here.
- **You don't have to be a member of the EU to trade with it.** Switzerland is not in the EU and it exports more per person to the EU than we do. The big banks and multinationals might be lobbying to keep us in the EU, but small and medium-sized businesses feel differently. Only 6 per cent of UK firms export to the EU, yet all have to abide by EU regulations on their business.
- **EU law overrules UK law.** This stops the British public from being able to vote out the politicians who make our laws. EU judges have already overruled British laws on issues like counter-terrorism powers, immigration, VAT, and prisoner voting. Even the Government's proposed new deal can be overturned after the referendum: it is not legally binding.
- **There are risks in voting either way.** Experts, politicians, and businesses are divided. People have to weigh up the risks and potential benefits of each course of action for themselves.

Want to know more? Visit **www.eureferendumfacts.org** or text FACTS to **88802** (standard charges apply).*

1 *Vote Leave's* foldout flyer, "The UK and the European Union: The Facts" (2016), outlined and elaborated on what the group termed as "facts" pertaining to the UK's relationship as a member-state with the EU.

The content of the flyer claims to present "facts" that would inform the voter on what to consider when deciding on a remain or leave vote, or a vote to "take back control", as the flyer states at the outset. These "facts" are printed in red and accompanied by explanations implying some sort of threat to UK sovereignty. The first "fact", for example, is "The UK joined the European Union in 1973." Accompanying this is a brief explanation outlining the decline in sovereignty the UK has faced since that point: "Back then it was known as the Common Market. But over the past 43 years, the EU has taken control over more and more areas which don't have anything to do with trade." The rest of the facts are accompanied by explanations that have either to do with the lack of control the UK has over its policies or with the economic freedoms the UK would have if it was not part of the EU. Two of the non-explicit economic facts, and the second and third listed in the first column, have to do with population demographics – specifically, migration.

The first "fact" here is "When we joined, there were just 9 member states" and the second is "More than half of net migration to the UK comes from the EU."

Both of the explanations accompanying these facts, while brief, are loaded with the implication that the EU heavily increases migration into the UK and this migration is damaging. For the first "fact", the explanation states that "Now there are 28 ... Five more countries are being considered for membership ... if they are let in, they will have the same rights as other member states." For the second fact, the explanation is that "More than a quarter of a million people came to the UK from the EU in the 12 months to September 2015 – the equivalent of a city the size of Plymouth or Newcastle in just one year." These two "facts", along with "The UK has joined the European Union in 1973" flow together to present one subliminal argument through their accompanying explanations: national sovereignty is subjugated by EU membership and the growth of membership into Eastern Europe increases migration, likely uncontrolled, into the UK, and this is all damaging to the UK as a whole. This focus on migration reflects the media tone of 2016 – as the date of the referendum drew closer, newspapers friendly to the Leave campaign, such as the Daily Mail, featured more and more pieces on population control.

The campaign flyer from the *Leave.EU* campaign is more sensationalist, with the headline "It's Time to Leave!". The exclamation point expresses a strong emotion – here, it is deterministic. The choice of blue is a contrast to the *Vote Leave* campaigns materials' red, but also should be noted due to the prominence of blue in the Remain campaigns' ephemera. For the uninformed eye, a glance might confuse the color coding of the two choices. What makes the flyer cover most striking, however, is the use of political cartoons – previously published, but combined for sensationalist purposes. There is fearmongering on the left, with a caricature of Mario Draghi – the European Central Bank president at the time – offering up a deal of 50 pence for 1€, playing to the idea that the UK would be forced to join the common currency at a great loss if remaining. The center cartoon depicts a sinking ship tied to the Euro currency iceberg, and on the right is a crude representation of Angela Merkel front and center of an international trade cake with David Cameron shunted of to the side of the group. Each cartoon is a comment on the EU's fiscal policies, and they all transmit a similar message that is intended as a prophetic threat: the EU is damaging to the UK's economy, and remaining a member ascertains the UK's future as dwindling in economic sovereignty. Migration as an argument is not present in the cartoons, as they are dedicated to satirizing leading political figures of the UK-EU relationship. Yet, the claim is very present in the text on the back of the flyer, which presents a 5-point argument as to why "It's Time to Leave!"

While a first glance might deem it non-affective, the text itself incorporates the fearmongering tactics of the pointed allegations present in the cartoons on the front. Migration, the second from the top and the first specific claim, states that "1.5 million EU migrants moved to the UK in 2004-2010", that "Migration poses a threat to low-income workers in our country" (a key segment of voters for Leavers), and that "Migration accounts for 1/3 of the deficit in social housing."



2 The front of *Leave.EU* double-sided flyer "It's Time to Leave!" depicts a combination of political cartoons satirizing then-leading figures of the EU and the back presents decontextualized claims and speculative scenarios on why leaving the EU would improve the UK.

Freedom of movement is a core EU principle.[7] This is inextricable from migration as migration is a means of mobility – social, economic, cultural – for citizens of EU member states. While this, on its own, has not been historically framed as threatening, the media environment of 2016 was permeated with news of refugee migration into Europe. Mainstream media coverage of this topic in continental Europe was tinged and often explicit with xenophobic and racist overtones and exploited domestic fears of overpopulation, scarce resources, and income abatement. The Leave campaign played into this, using border protection from migrants, both European and non-European citizens, as a key claim for secession from the EU.

THE PAMPHLETARY LIVES

Engagement with the migration claim was evident in the digital public sphere, where media played a cogent role in disseminating claims and where public engagement was measurable in digital spaces that served as forums. Such spaces are typically text-based, encouraging short-form writing as a means to engage in public debate. Such spaces can range from social media platforms like Twitter to the comment pages on television and newspaper websites. In the digital public

7 "Free movement – EU nationals", in: *European Commission*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=457.

sphere, the textual nature of dissemination and engagement makes the pamphletary visible, and to an extent, preservable. It was the combination of media and public engagement in the digital public sphere that brought the migration claim to life.

In the case of Brexit, a prominent media actor was the Daily Mail. The Daily Mail is one of Britain's highest circulating papers and sustains a highly visited website. From the tone of its Brexit content in 2016 and beyond, it was a Leave campaign advocate. An example of this is an article published on May 29, 2016, titled "David Cameron 'lives in too much luxury' to care about mass migration: Eurosceptic Priti Patel says Remain leaders are too rich to care about real people's concerns."[8] The title of the article is hyperbolic, paraphrasing the first sentence of a paywall-controlled article that previously appeared on the Telegraph.[9] The Daily Mail article, however, is fully accessible to the website-visitor, and elaborates on how migration as a claim plays into the Leave campaign and how Leave campaigners criticize Remain campaigners as being removed from the interests of the UK's "'wider public'":

> Employment minister Priti Patel said the Prime Minister and other top Remain campaigners who went to public schools were 'insulated' from how working people felt about immigration. ...Net EU migration to the UK reached a record 184,000 during 2015 – against a government target of 'tens of thousands'. A total of 333,000 more people arrived in the country than left, when also including migrants from outside the EU. Many in the Leave side think migration is the key to winning the referendum as they look for an advantage to overcome consistent polling which places them behind Remain.[10]

The article places the migration claim as central to Brexit campaigns, with Brexiteers having shifted it to the center of their arguments. As was common practice for the Daily Mail, it is also peppered with quotes of criticism targeted at David Cameron, a Remainer. While the article may masquerade as appearing or attempting to be informative, the headline, the tags and description, and the imbalanced inclusion of Cameron-critical quotes give it a pro-Leave, anti-migration tinge.

Readers, however, tend to read into what they want to read, and the most engaged readers read into the claim. In the heated discussion in the comments section, readers affirmed their disdain for "elites" and emphatically played into the migration "threat." These comments are public – visible and accessible without

8 Matt Hunter: "David Cameron 'lives in too much luxury' to care about mass migration: Eurosceptic Priti Patel says Remain leaders are too rich to care about real people's concerns", in: *The Daily Mail*, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3614567/Torys-Brexit-civil-war-escalates-Leave-campaigners-target-PM.html (May 29, 2016).

9 Tim Ross: "David Cameron and George Osborne too Rich to Care about Migration", in: *The Telegraph*, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/28/david-cameron-and-george-osborne-too-rich-to-care-about-migratio (May 29, 2016).

10 Hunter: "David Cameron 'lives in too much luxury' to care about mass migration: Eurosceptic Priti Patel says Remain leaders are too rich to care about real people's concerns" (2016).

a firewall and displayed at the bottom of the page in three categories: "Newest", "Oldest", "Best rated", and "Worst rated." The comments affirming these claims are prevalent in the first three sections, while comments negating or criticizing the views presented in this article are visible in the "Worst rated" section. In this way, the Daily Mail and similar media outlets make their segment of public sphere active and observable – they make it easy, and more likely, for relevant publics to engage. The 912 comments on this article demonstrate this.

Publics' engagement, of course, is not just limited to those in different scales of agreement, but of course, the visibility of these tendencies is exacerbated by digital conditions such as echo chambers or filter bubbles.[11] However, when campaigns become mass movements and enter the mainstream and seek to shape opinion and decision on national borders, a larger segment of the public is engaged: in agreement, disagreement, and the various shades in between. Such was the reaction of British academia, as in the lead-up to the referendum, several UK universities established blogs to engage in the conversation in longer form. One example is the University of London's European Institute blog, which published a piece by Ann White, Professor of Polish Studies, about the lives of Polish Britons. White wrote:

> Recent research into civic participation among Poles in the UK, conducted for the Warsaw-based Institute of Public Affairs, suggests that many others take part in leisure activities alongside non-Polish people living in Britain. Travelling by bus from Warsaw to Podlasie region last summer, I happened to sit next to a post-accession migrant (like myself, on holiday in Poland) who entertained us during the ride by showing me her photos of walking holidays in the Peak District and mid-Wales.[12]

The Peak District and mid-Wales are common holiday locations in the UK for Britons, and with the migration claim, notions of who belonged to and in the UK were being challenged. In the blog, White emphasized the "home" element of the UK for Polish migrants, positioning Polish residents (citizens or not) as everyday Britons, enjoying similar experiences as those who had a generational history in the UK. The textual connection here was not agreement or echo-based, but a strategic contribution to add a contrasting, experiential perspective to the circulating conversation.

11 There is an extensive field of literature examining such digital conditions. For more on filter bubbles, echo chambers, and related digital conditions, see: Axel Bruns: *Are Filter Bubbles Real*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2019); Jessica Clark, Tracy Slyke: *Beyond the Echo Chamber: Reshaping Politics Through Networked Progressive Media*, New York: The New Press (2010); Nathan Rambukkana (ed.): *Hashtag Publics: The Power and Politics of Discursive Networks*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing (2015); Cristian Vaccari, Augusto Valeriani: *Outside the Bubble: Social Media and Political Participation in Western Democracies*, New York: Oxford University Press (2021).

12 Anne White: "Unsettling times for a settled population? Polish perspectives on Brexit",

THE PAMPHLETARY IN MOTION

What makes a pamphlet unique amongst literary genre is that it is living and non-static. A pamphlet becomes a pamphlet not just by the intent of the author, but by its uses and reception in the public sphere. A pamphlet is always political literature, but what was once a pamphlet can later be a historical document, and what is a pamphlet can simultaneously be a flyer or a poster. The pamphlet can be seen a genre, but what I discuss in this paper is a practice.[13] What makes a text and its claims pamphletary, thus, is the life they gain in the public sphere – this is the practice of the pamphlet. This life is not only in the form of public engagement with a text and its claims, but also in the generation of responsive pamphletary material.

The migration claim picked up remarkable traction in the public sphere, making it the cornerstone argument for Brexiteers as the referendum drew closer. From subtle and implicit fearmongering in earlier campaign materials, it quickly developed into rhetoric ripe with xenophobic tropes.



3 Brexit group *Better Off Out*'s foldout flyer "Is Britain Getting Too Crowded" detailed the cons of being a member-state of the EU and the pros of leaving it.

"Is Britain Getting Too Crowded?" was the bold question splashed across the foldout flyer disseminated by *Better Off Out*, a Eurosceptic group that predated Cameron's promise of an In/Out referendum. The cover of their flyer

in: *UCL European Institute*, www.ucl.ac.uk/european-institute/news/2016/apr/unsettling-times-settled-population-polish-perspectives-brexit (April 14, 2016).

13 I discuss political text and pamphletary practice in digital conditions, but popular definitions of the pamphlet itself tend to be of material texts. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as a "short" bound "work of several pages," or a "work of polemical or political nature issued in this form." These "polemical" and "political" qualities are also assigned by George Orwell, who described the pamphlet as "written either 'for' or 'against' somebody or something," and as "always a form of protest." See: "Pamphlet", in: *Oxford English Dictionary*, www.oed.com/dictionary/pamphlet_n, (December 2023); George Orwell: "Introduction", in: *British Pamphleteers, Vol. 1: From the Sixteenth Century to the French Revolution*, ed. by George Orwell, Reginald Reynolds, London: Wingate (1948), pp. 7–18, p. 7.

superimposed the question on a generic picture of a large crowd and the foldout page elaborated on the EU's freedom of movement policy – what they directly linked to subtopics titled "Unfair Immigration", "Fall in wages", "Restore British Control", "Impact on lower earners", and "Rise in foreign born employment." All of these were described as negative aspects of having to adhere to the EU's freedom of movement policy. As with other campaign materials, this content was distributed both in person and online, and these arguments were notable elements of their website and referenced by media outlets both for and against secession. The intended fluidity between print and digital was explicit; on the back of the print version of the flyer were both email and post addresses as well as information about where to connect with *Better Off Out* on Facebook and Twitter.

As forms of the migration claim got more sensational, a Leave campaign undertaken by UKIP exploited the migration argument in a melodramatic fashion with its Breaking Point poster. The Breaking Point poster, with the subtitle "The EU has failed us all" and the byline "We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders", placed an image of a group of refugees in Slovenia at its fore. UKIP leader Nigel Farage held an official unveiling of the poster on June 16, 2016 in London as UKIP launched the image on Twitter the same day, barely a week before the referendum was to take place. The poster suggested that as an EU member, it was inevitable that refugee migration into Eastern European regions would continue onwards to the UK, and as an EU member, the UK would be forced to accept it. This, the title alleged, would either push the UK to a "breaking point" when it came to national population, or was the "breaking point" of the UK-EU relationship. The Breaking Point poster took it too far – it received criticism from several notable Leave campaigners as well as vehement denunciation from critical publics. A tweet quoted in the Guardian, a leading Remain-favoring media outlet, compared the poster to Nazi propaganda, and it was one of many.[14] The images in this and other tweets depicted refugees in Europe after the first world war who Nazi propaganda at the time described as "parasites, undermining their host countries"; the images were screenshots from a BBC documentary called *Auschwitz: The Nazis and The Final Solution*. The tweets were published on June 16 as well, the same day the article was published on the Guardian, demonstrating the acceleration in visible pamphletary circulations enabled by the digital public sphere.

While the attention to Breaking Point was certainly viral, the criticism didn't completely die down immediately. In March 2019, nearly 3 years after the referendum, the critical attention generated by the Breaking Point poster led to the launch of a parody poster by the anti-Brexit group *Led By Donkeys*. The parody poster kept the original "Breaking Point" title, but adapted it with the subtitle "The Brexit elites have failed us all" and the phrase "The UK is being swamped by a tide of incompetents" across the bottom. Instead of refugees, *Led By Donkeys*' parody depicted prominent figures associated with the Leave

14 Heather Stewart, Rowena Mason: "Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster reported to police", in: *The Guardian*, www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/16/nigel-farage-defends-ukip-breaking-point-poster-queue-of-migrants (June 16, 2016).



4 UKIP Leader Nigel Farage unveils the Breaking Point Poster on a the side of a van which is subsequently driven around London on June 16, 2016 (top), and *Led By Donkeys* brings out their parody of UKIP's Breaking Point poster by plastering on the side of a van and driving it around London on March 7, 2019 (bottom).

campaign: Boris Johnson appeared at the bottom far left and Nigel Farage was pictured at the bottom far right holding up the original Breaking Point poster. In similar fashion to UKIP, the poster was launched on March 7th at Westminster Square during a protest demanding a second referendum on staying in the EU while simultaneously being disseminated by the group online. The trajectory of the migration claim was powerful and lasted years. This was made possible by

hybrid real-world/digital conditions, demonstrating the circulatory life of the pamphletary that is set in motion by the discursive relationship between text, its disseminators, and engaged publics.

FULL CIRCLE

The examination of political text through a literary lens brings novel insights into the ways in which movements and publics interact. By identifying and describing the pamphletary qualities of mass-disseminated political text, it becomes evident why certain political claims gain traction over others. It is in their circulations – in the public engagement they generate and in the forms of agreement, critique, and responsive they produce – that text and the claims it makes becomes pamphletary. And it is this pamphletary dimension that renders the text politically or socially efficacious – or not.

What makes this dimension more measurable than ever are the conditions produced by the digital public sphere. This sphere enables a relationship most dominantly encapsulated in writing and reading. It also produces the potential of unscalable mass dissemenation and participation; political materials and public engagement in these conditions becomes increasingly democratized, but also dangerous. Along with a massive change in accessibility are risky politics of information, where sensationalist claims can persuade as well as polarize and radicalize, and have real-world results or implications depending on a matter of perspective.

The conditions of the digital public sphere also enable a shapeshifting of concepts. Sensationalized issues can be connected to simplified ideas of freedom and sovereignty, but these also generate criticism that is then reported, and when strong enough, produces reciprocal political material. The circulations of the pamphletary exemplify this; the Guardian's reference of tweets in their coverage and *Led By Donkeys*' production of a parody poster are demonstrative of this textual life in motion. It is thus imperative to understand the literary value of political text – it serves a powerful purpose: to shape opinion, to instrumentalize citizen power, and to induce major change. But most importantly, it diffuses an ideological bond between movements and publics – a circulatory relationship that is best represented by text in the digital public sphere. In the case of territorialist movements today, it can be a potent strategy to actualize democratic real-world change and redirect the future of the places these movements and publics inhibit.

AESTHETICS

PRETTY PAMPHLETS

PIERRE-HÉLI MONOT

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Pierre-Héli Monot: "Pretty Pamphlets", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 67–82.

> "The relationship between the crimes and the torments is never anything but poetic." Friedrich W. J. Schelling: *Ueber Dante in philosophischer Beziehung* (1803)

Few literary genres have been as neglected by formal literary aesthetics as the pamphlet. It is often – and almost always in an offhand manner – considered a preeminently instrumental mode of address which particular social actors employ to achieve specific ends in a given sociopolitical context. Beginning with the mutual involution of the Reformation, the progressive globalization of trade, and the advent of the printing press,[1] the pamphlet has been a literary genre and format that populations turn to – both as authors and readers – whenever they wish to crystallize political wills into political institutions,[2] i.e., whenever they aspire to transpose "statements of desire"[3] into statements of fact.

Historians of the public sphere and literary theorists alike have usually underlined, if anything, the material or transcendental[4] dimension of pamphletary aesthetics, pointing either to the "physical composition, ephemeral duration, and commodity seduction"[5] of pamphletary texts, or to their gesturing toward messianic social ends, their paradoxical social functionalization as mechanisms of political stabilization,[6] their dependence on specific infrastructures of reproduction and circulation, their agency as originators of counterpublics,[7] and their historical function as vectors of economic rationalization.[8] Here, a large segment of the critical tradition posits the sociopolitical efficacy of the pamphlet while bypassing the aesthetic conditions of possibility of this efficacy itself.

Can the sociopolitical efficacy of pamphletary literature be conversely attributed to its immanent, stylistic, or illocutionary features? Does the political agency of pamphletary literature largely depend on the pamphlet *as* literature, that is, more generally, on the "literariness" of the pamphlet as a polemical statement? Here, correlations between aesthetic properties and sociohistorical effects

1 Carla Hesse: "Economic Upheavals in Publishing", in: *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775–1800*, ed. by Robert Darnton, Daniel Roche, Berkeley: University of California Press (1989), pp. 69–97.

2 Throughout this text, I use "institutions" in the broad sense of instituted representational schemes of political norms proposed, among others, by Cornelius Castoriadis. Generally: Cornelius Castoriadis: "Institution of Society and Religions", in: idem: *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, trans. by David Ames Curtis, Stanford: Stanford University Press (1997), pp. 311–330.

3 Roland Barthes: "The Adjective is the 'Statement' of Desire", in: idem: *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962–1980*, Berkeley: University of California Press (1991), pp. 172–176.

4 Here understood in its non-Kantian sense.

5 Nicholas Thoburn: "Communist Objects and the Values of Printed Matter", in: *Social Text* 28/2 (2010), pp. 1–30.

6 Benoît Bréville: "Pétitionnaires de tous les pays", in: *Le Monde diplomatique* (August 2020), p. 28.

7 Michael Warner: *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York: Zone Books (2002), pp. 65-123. See also: Andreas Reckwitz: *Das hybride Subjekt: Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp (2020), pp. 169-185.

8 Andrew Pettegree: *Brand Luther: 1517, Printing, and the Making of the Reformation*, New York: Penguin (2016), pp. 22–35.

are often affirmed, sometimes loosely extrapolated from empirical studies,[9] rarely substantiated by close attention to the material itself, and never properly theorized at a scale commensurate with their object.

There are, in fact, several historical arguments to be made against aesthetic reductionisms – transcendental, immanent, and materialist alike. Notably, modern pamphletary literature emerged against the backdrop of a formal aesthetics that predominantly sought to secure the legitimacy of aesthetic pursuits in social settings that increasingly codified behavioral expectations[10] and increasingly constrained socially divisive statements.[11] This is still the case today. From Immanuel Kant to Luc Boltanski, legitimate preoccupation with the beautiful pivoted on various attempts to regulate deviations from socially beneficial ends (the classical triumvirate of *freedom*, *autonomy*, and *truth*) and to do so *positively* by defining the specific moral, epistemological, political, or social utility ("affordances") of aesthetic pursuits. Pamphlets have historically tended to reaffirm this coupling in a particular way, simultaneously upsetting *both* prevailing aesthetic norms and competing conceptions of the desirable political life whenever they successfully triggered large-scale discursive events in the public sphere. Since the Reformation, short-form polemical literature has therefore tended to pull the aesthetic rug out from under instituted conceptions of socially beneficial ends, and vice versa. Hence, aesthetic reductionisms fail to grasp the constitutive bivalence of pamphletary literature.

In this article, I will make the argument that both literary and social historians should take the full measure of what can be best thought of as a series of minute anomalies in the history of aesthetics. From the early sixteenth century onwards, the pamphlet has unleashed its negativity against both the *beautiful* and the *good* and introduced aesthetic problems and styles which literary theory has come to take for granted since the late twentieth century. As a crucial historical modality of the politicization of literature and the literarization of the political,[12] pamphletary literature has fundamentally altered the kind of questions literary historians ask about literature.

This somewhat trivial thesis has four non-trivial applications for literary history and aesthetics which I want to discuss very summarily in this essay. First, Kantian aesthetics provides a counterintuitive framework for the study of pamphlets as aesthetic forms, provided we grant some of Kant's own marginalia the weight they deserve. Second, Enlightenment pamphleteering often served as the medium of a highly generalizing critique of Enlightenment philosophy, pointing out the latter's dependence on precisely the aesthetic and rhetorical strategies it associated with the *Ancien Régime*. Third, literary aesthetics should pay attention

9 Generally: Karine Nahon, Jeff Hemsley: *Going Viral*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2013).

10 See also: Niklas Barth, Pierre-Héli Monot: "Negationen der Negationskontrolle: Eine Infrastrukturgeschichte polemogener Rede", in: *Medien der Infrastruktur*, ed. by Friedrich Balke, Bernhard Siegert, Joseph Vogl, forthcoming.

11 See also: Bertrand Binoche: *Écrasez l'infâme! Philosopher à l'âge des Lumières*, Paris: La fabrique éditions (2018), pp. 19–58.

12 Michel Hastings, Cédric Passard, Juliette Rennes: "Les mutations du pamphlet dans la France contemporaine", in: *Mots: Les langages du politique* 91 (2009), pp. 5–17, p. 5.

to the way its epistemic demands negate the very function of pamphleteering by demanding that authorship, agency, and meaning be attributed to texts whose anonymity, obliqueness and illegibility served specific urgent political functions. Finally, I draw on basic game theory to sketch out a hypothesis which allows us to think about the specific agency of pamphletary literature: the political power of pamphleteering is perhaps best thought of as the kind of "pressure" that results from statements becoming properly "common," that is, from subjects having knowledge of all other subjects' knowledge of a given political issue. I thereby reframe the concept this essay begins with – Kantian *sensus communis* – in terms of a game-theoretical *common knowledge*.

THE NAME

The status of pamphlets as "agitational objects,"[13] "communist objects"[14] or, much more loosely, as "*textes violents et agressifs*"[15] jars with the disputed (and almost certainly erroneous[16]) etymology of the term itself: in name, the *pamphilos* should be loved by all, end the propagation of eristic discourse, and reassert political commonality. In fact, however, the oppositional logic of pamphletary discourse has long served various factional groups intent on decomposing both orderly discourse and orderly aesthetic modes, and subsequently reconstituting political commonality around redefined political goals or socioethical stances. By achieving this antithetical motion of de- and recomposition, pamphletary literature underscores some of the defining fault lines of canonical aesthetics.

Kantian judgments of taste, for instance, depend on the suspension not only of "interest," but also of the historicity and contingency of the "sensus communis" on whose account aesthetic judgments always refer to universality (i.e., to what Kant calls the modes of "representation of everyone else"[17]). In this traditional reading of Kantian aesthetics, *sensus communis* (or the "public sense,"[18] in Kant's own paraphrase) is a reflective faculty: it takes account of the *extant* modes of representations and judgments of all others as a regulative ideal. Many of Kant's prominent commentators have justly taken issue with this highly reified understanding of *sensus communis*. In line with Johann Gottfried Herder's early forays into aesthetic historicism, Hans-Georg Gadamer criticized Kant for having emptied *sensus communis* of "all political content" and turning it into a "purely theo-

13 Gillian Whiteley: "The Allure of Pamphilos: The Radical Art of Pamphleteering", in: *Art, Politics, and The Pamphleteer*, ed. by Jane Tormey, Gillian Whiteley, London: Bloomsbury Academic (2021), pp. 5–28, p. 6.

14 Thoburn: "Communist Objects and the Values of Printed Matter" (2010), pp. 1–30.

15 Hastings, Passard, Rennes: "Les mutations du pamphlet dans la France contemporaine" (2009), p. 5.

16 Yvonne Bellenger: "Le pamphlet avant le pamphlet: le mot et la chose", in: *Cahiers de l'Association International des Études Françaises* 36 (1984), pp. 87–96.

17 Immanuel Kant: *Critique of Judgement*, ed. by Nicholas Walker, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2007), p. 123.

18 Kant: *Critique of Judgement* (2007), p. 123.

retical faculty," stripping it of its "genuine critical significance" in the process.[19] While it did retain its meaning as a "general civic quality" in England (Shaftesbury, Hutcheson), Kantian *sensus communis* was demoted to a mere "scholasticism of the basic faculties" in continental Europe.[20] Others, like Hannah Arendt or Jean-François Lyotard, tried to modulate the normative power of Kantian public sense. For Arendt, Kant missed the opportunity to explicitly frame his political theory in fully processual and communicational terms (i.e., in liberal ones): here, judgments of taste might have secured a public awareness of the contingency and historicity of *sensus communis* itself, thereby securing the political productivity of aesthetics for any liberal society oriented toward self-reflexivity.[21] Lyotard, for his part, throws out the baby with the bathwater and declares both "sensus" and "communis" to be "ungraspable" (what else? This is 1988, after all.) The historical and political modulation of the "community" which qualifies *sensus communis* thus comes at the cost of the intelligibility of community itself: aesthetic judgments can transform the community, yet by the same token the latter becomes "unintellected" and, in turn, "unintelligent."[22]

Yet it is Kant himself who, in an almost always neglected part of §40, provides the clearest solution to the proper politicization of *sensus communis*: weighing one's subjective aesthetic judgment "with the collective reason of mankind" is "accomplished by weighing the judgment, not so much with actual, as rather with merely possible, judgments of others" ("*nicht sowohl wirkliche, als vielmehr bloß mögliche Urteile*").[23] While Kant does not elaborate, the "judgments of others" are "merely possible," rather than "actual," for two palpable reasons. First, individuals do not have empirical, unmediated access to the judgments of others: Kantian *sensus communis* is a necessary fiction at least insofar as it depends on its active and uncertain reconstruction by individuals during the elaboration of aesthetic judgments. Second, and more compellingly, the judgments of others are "merely possible" because any community can be subjected to radical sociohistorical transformations, thereby predicating the imagination of a *sensus communis* on the most radical sociohistorical *uncertainty*. Here, Kant does provide some arresting comments. A footnote to §65 explains that in the case of a complete transformation, recently undertaken, of a great people into a state, the word *organization* has frequently, and with much propriety, been used for the constitution of the legal authorities and even of the entire body politic. For in a whole of this kind certainly no member should be a mere means, but should also be an end, and, seeing that he contributes to the possibility of the entire body, should have his position and function in turn defined by the idea of the whole.[24] Means and ends: Here, Kant is not referring to a metaphysical grounding of morals, but

19 Hans-Georg Gadamer: *Truth and Method*, London: Bloomsbury (2004), p. 25.
20 Gadamer: *Truth and Method* (2004), p. 25.
21 Hannah Arendt: *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1992), pp. 68-80.
22 Jean-François Lyotard: "Sensus Communis", in: *Paragraph* 11/1 (1988), pp. 1–23.
23 Kant: *Critique of Judgement* (2007), p. 123.
24 Kant: *Critique of Judgement* (2007), p. 203.

rather to their historical transpositions, i.e., to the American Revolution,[25] that "certain union," that "complete transformation… of a great people into a state."[26] In revolutionary times, aesthetic judgments are necessarily passed on highly uncertain terms, given the sudden suspension of any plausible "universality" to the benefit of factionality, dissensus, and the teleological constitution of a newly formalized community: Kant's post-revolutionary "state" (Kantian scholars sometimes wish to explore the implications of a "*dissensus communis*"[27]: this would be the appropriate setting). The formation of a new *sensus communis*, i.e., the formation of the very terms upon which individual judgments of taste may be *plausibly* universalized and referred back to a concrete political community, is itself the object of revolutionary politics.

Kant suggests that during revolutionary times, i.e., during times in which "organization" operates as a particular form of statecraft, causality is suspended insofar as the "position and function" of the individual and "the idea of the whole" are suddenly made mutually dependent. Both poles are trapped in a process of acausal,[28] hypothetical, and mutual definition, that is, a process of "organization" (§65). The individual hypothesizes a "whole" (the "entire body politic," i.e., a universalized referent), which in turn allocates a position and function to the individual. We must therefore underscore Kant's revolutionary caveat: the fabled "subjective universality"[29] of Kantian aesthetic judgments is an oxymoronic predicament *except in revolutionary situations*. Then and only then are subjectivity and universality *always potentially coinciding*, that is, they can be made to coincide by the mere aesthetic agency of an individual hypothesization of the whole, a hypothesization which may, in turn, be recognized by all others as both *plausible* and *desirable*.

THE THINGS

The pamphlet is the literary modality of this coincidence, historically as much as aesthetically. There is, of course, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) and its antithetical motion of de- and recomposition of the *sensus communis*. It has, to my knowledge, never been noted that the pamphlet's opening paragraphs echo the dialectics of Kantian aesthetic judgments. Paine begins by framing pre-revolutionary events as unmediated impressions upon his subjectivity (the "sentiments," the "tumult," the "superficial appearance" of this "long and violent

25 On this point, see: Ortwin Graef: "'Sweet Dreams, Monstered Nothings': Catachresis in Kant and Coriolanus", in: *The Ethics in Literature*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield, Dominic Rainsford, Tim Woods, Basingstoke: Macmillan (1999), pp. 233–236.

26 Kant: *Critique of Judgement* (2007), p. 203.

27 See for instance: Josef Früchtl: "Sensus and Dissensus Communis: The Comedy of Democracy (Following Cavell)", in: *Aesthetic Investigations* 4/1 (2020), pp. 96–111.

28 In §65, "organization" stands in for "revolution", with Kant contrasting both terms with "causality", "it has nothing analogous to any causality known to us", in: Kant: *Critique of Judgement* (2007), p. 203. On this point: Diane Morgan: *Kant Trouble: Obscurities of the Enlightenment*, London: Routledge (2000), pp. 140–146.

29 Kant: *Critique of Judgement* (2007), p. 43.

abuse of power"). He then asserts he has "studiously avoided every thing which is personal among ourselves."[30] The first salvo of Paine's text is as clearly binary as Kant's aesthetic treatise, whatever the historical reasons for this parallelism. Yet this distinction soon collapses, in turn mimicking Kant's revolutionary caveat: in time, Paine's collective subject ("ourselves," "Common sense will tell *us*"[31]) simultaneously becomes an authorial *pluralis modestiae*, a Republican We, and a universal referent (the "mankind" both Paine and Kant call upon throughout their respective texts). Paine presents a *sensus communis* to which the author has unmediated access precisely because it is a performative object: the common sense of *Common Sense* is affirmed, rationally demonstrated, and declared to be universal by the text itself. As is Paine's reading counterpublic, specifically as a "kind of social totality" that "exists by virtue of being addressed" (Warner).[32]

A less immediately obvious example is nested in the fifth chapter of the Marquis de Sade's barbaric *Philosophy in the Boudoir* (1795, also translated as *Philosophy in the Bedroom*). A mock pamphlet "bought outside the Palace of Equality [...] straight from the press," entitled "Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen, if You Would Become Republicans," is read aloud by the libertine Dolmancé during the political and sexual education of 15-year-old Eugénie. A rare example of a fictional pamphlet in canonical literature, "Yet Another Effort" straddles two versions of the same republican *sens commun*. On the one hand, Sade invokes popular power as the only legitimate source of Republicanism: The French Revolution is the natural effect of renewed popular political vigor. On the other, Sade invokes the metaphysical failings of the Revolution: If all references to God ("an idea without object" and a "hallucination"[33]) have not been expunged from the post-revolutionary State, it may not properly be thought of as a republican one. Should Republicans decide to dispense with transcendental foundations of morality, however, they would then be brought to condone

> *prostitution, incest, rape,* and *sodomy.* We surely must not for one moment doubt that all those known as moral crimes, that is to say, all acts of the sort to which those we have just cited belong, are of total inconsequence under a government whose sole duty consists in preserving, by whatever may be the means, the form essential to its continuance: there you have a republican government's unique morality. Well, the republic being permanently menaced from the outside by the despots surrounding it, the means to its preservation cannot be imagined as moral means, for the republic will preserve itself only by war, and nothing is less moral than war. I ask how one will be able to demonstrate that in a state rendered immoral by its obligations,

30 Thomas Paine: "Common Sense", in: *Common Sense and Other Writings*, ed. by Jason M. Opal, New York: Norton (2012 [1775–1776]), p. 3.

31 Paine: "Common Sense" (2012), p. 33.

32 Warner: *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002), p. 50.

33 I am quoting from the older but excellent translation by Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse. See Marquis de Sade: "Philosophy in the Bedroom", in: *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*, New York: Grove Press (1965 [1795]), p. 304.



1 Thomas Paine, holding scroll "Rights of Man." Unknown, *Wha wants me* [sic!] (26 December 1792), Library of Congress.

it is essential that the individual be moral? I will go further: it is a very good thing he is not.[34]

Sade's fictional pamphlet has been the object of few interpretations, yet these have always been highly sophisticated, most of them centering on the philosophical foundations of libertine and atheist ethics. Yet I believe they miss the point

34 Sade: "Philosophy in the Bedroom" (1965), p. 314.

when they relate Sade's *Philosophy in the Boudoir* to Kant's ethics, rather than to Kant's aesthetics. While it is true, as Jacques Lacan argued, that the ethical "coherence" of Sade's pamphlet is "precisely the Kantian criteria [*sic*] Sade advances to justify his positions that constitute what can be called a kind of anti-morality,"[35] Sade demonstrates something altogether different: the republican *sensus communis* is a contingent, historical, and malleable referent that can undergo rapid transformations, whatever the internal coherence of its ethical norms.

This distinction is historically important because Sade, freely adapting entire passages from Baron d'Holbach and Voltaire, discreetly argues that the dialectic of the Radical Enlightenment is not only inconsistent, but also dependent on precisely the aesthetic and rhetorical strategies it associated with the *Ancien Régime*: revolutionaries wrongly predicated their moral and aesthetic sensibilities on a benevolent, near-reflexive, Rousseauist "*peuple*" that, for all practical purposes, had *plausibly* been abolished together with hereditary monarchy. Conversely, a post-Revolutionary Republic must necessarily take account of a new "representation of everyone else" (Kant), that is, quite literally, of a new "regime of representation" [36]: by coupling ethical values ("coherence," "clarity") to social outcomes certain to be rejected by the revolutionary population (the legalization of "*prostitution, incest*, *rape*, and *sodomy*"), Sade insists, as he does elsewhere in Boudoir, that brute rhetorical force must supersede argumentative quality. For Sade, in other words, there can be no Radical Enlightenment, only a process of radical oppositional politics in which pamphleteering (as a style and political logic) is the norm.

What political theory does "Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen" ultimately propose? How does the *aestheticism* of Sade's critique of the Revolution modify revolutionary conceptions of the state? In effect, nowhere does Sade more clearly agree with Kant than in his theory of revolutionary statecraft. For both Sade and Kant, the revolutionary state is a political organ solely devoted to its own preservation, i.e., to its own kind of political *conatus*.[37] For Kant, a spontaneous, a-causal "organization" such as that of the American Revolution is the only situation in which the contradiction between individual judgments and the totalizing "representation of everyone else" is potentially resolved. The state emerges out of this coincidence and strives to maintain its existence. For Sade, too, a "revolutionary state" must remain an oxymoron as long as it depends on reified referents: from the moment it dispenses with a transcendental foundation for morality, it must either dispense with morality altogether (and condone *prostitution*, *incest*, *rape*, and *sodomy*), *or ground morality in a new aesthetics, that is, a new regime of* "representation of everyone else." In *Boudoir*, perhaps as much as in as in the imaginary of

35 Jacques Lacan: "Kant with Sade", in: *October* 51 (1989), pp. 55–75, p. 59.

36 Stuart Hall: "Introduction", in: *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. by Stuart Hall, London: Sage Publications (1997), pp. 1–12, p. 8.

37 The question of whether Kant ever read Spinoza is an old one; it was recently raised again by Omri Boehm. Sade almost certainly did read Spinoza, yet primarily understood him as a "virtuous atheist", with all the amusing contradictions this must entail from a Sadian perspective. See Omri Boehm: *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2014), pp. 405–417.

the Revolution at large, the pamphlet is the *explicit* literary medium of this twofold regime change.

THE EMPTY CHAIR: PAMPHLETEERS AS A RECURSIVE PUBLIC

Popular lyrics and tunes, jokes, gossip, unofficial currency, and grey literature are often co-created or recreated as they circulate. Consequently, few scholarly works achieve the kind of fine granularity needed to attribute basic properties to these diffuse objects (authorship, original context, intention, popular reception, etc.). Literary and social historians usually struggle to give an account of the concrete social existence of very high-circulation cultural artifacts.

Pamphlets are a relative exception to the rule. Because pamphlets have been the object of systematic surveillance, censorship, preservation by legal authorities, and cataloging by police forces since the early seventeenth century,[38] they also represent an immense, if fragmentary, archive of global polemical texts and sentiments. We simply know more about this kind of grey literature than we do about any other.

One paradoxical consequence of this archive is that it reveals an extreme murkiness when it comes to most of the things historians and theorists usually want to know about literary texts. This is the case for the authorship of pamphletary texts, which is unknown or, more precisely, a Rumsfeldian "known unknown" in most cases. Their successive reproduction and modification by readers further muddies their original intent and context, sometimes to the point of complete indecipherability. Finally, their popular reception is either obscure in content (as publicly expressing opinions on polemical utterances often entails political risks), or, much more recently, overwhelming in scope (as ordinary readers have posted an enormous body of colloquial literary and political criticism online since the very early 1990s).[39] We know that we cannot know what we usually want to know about literary texts – such known unknowns are precious, if negative, signposts for literary historians. In fact, the canonical pamphlets – Martin Luther's *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* (1517), Émile Zola's *J'Accuse...!* (1898), Paine's *Common Sense* (1776), Valerie Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto* (1967) – are anything but representative of the genre at large, precisely because such properties can, and have long been, attributed to them.

Yet this misapprehension has been central not only to the study of pamphletary literature by historians and theorists, but also to governmental control of seditious speech since the mid-eighteenth century. Under Louis XV, police were mobilized daily to capture the authors of antimonarchical odes and pamphlets. Robert Darnton has analyzed one of these cases in detail. After the arrest of a medical student in possession of a seditious poem, police forces mapped the circulation of the text:

38 The emphasis is on the *systematic* nature of surveillance by dedicated institutions.

39 On the history of the "reading public", also see: Stefan Collini: *The Nostalgic Imagination: History in English Criticism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2019), pp. 126–155.

> [...] as the investigation broadened, the picture became more complicated. The poem crossed paths with five other poems, each of them seditious (at least in the eyes of the police) and each with its own diffusion pattern. They were copied on scraps of paper, traded for similar scraps, dictated to more copyists, memorized, declaimed, printed in underground tracts, adapted in some cases to popular tunes, and sung. In addition to the first group of suspects sent to the Bastille, seven others were also imprisoned; and they implicated five more, who escaped. In the end, the police filled the Bastille with fourteen purveyors of poetry [...]. But they never found the author of the original verse. In fact, it may not have had an author, because people added and subtracted stanzas and modified phrasing as they pleased. It was a case of collective creation; and the first poem overlapped and intersected with so many others that, taken together, they created a field of poetic impulses, bouncing from one transmission point to an-other and filling the air with what the police called "mauvais propos" or "mauvais discours," a cacophony of sedition set to rhyme.[40]

Located at the intersection of popular dissent and police surveillance, the pamphlet sits uneasily alongside the vast transformation of modern statecraft into what anthropologist James C. Scott has described as "High Modernism," i.e., a system of governance through legibility and simplification typical of increasingly centralized societies. The standardization of units of measure, the legal framing of literary authorship, the centralization of administrative management, the later Hausmannian emphasis on straight lines, and, most importantly, the identification of disenfranchised political subjects through the attribution of surnames all contributed to the "legibility" of the body politic by the state: "an overall, aggregate, synoptic view of a selective reality is achieved, making possible a high degree of schematic knowledge, control, and manipulation."[41] Against the backdrop of a drive toward a synoptic grasp of the ensemble, the pamphlet can best be understood as an "assemblage of enunciation"[42] in which social agents interact functionally so as to protect their personhood from reprisal. In return, these agents obtain a tacit poetic license to intervene aesthetically and poetically in the objects they circulate.[43]

Christopher Kelty has provided a fragmentary interpretive model for the kind of mutual interpenetration of social theory and hermeneutics at play here. Discussing cypherpunks, sysadmins, bloggers, and coders, Kelty describes communicational groups "whose defining characteristic is recursive in nature: a group constituted by a shared, profound concern for the technical and legal conditions of possibility for their own association. I call this mode of association a 'recursive

40 Robert Darnton: *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press (2010), p. 11.

41 James C. Scott: *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press (1998), p. 11.

42 Marco Deseriis: "On the Symbolic Power of Shared Pseudonyms", in: *Seachange* 6/1 (2015), pp. 51–62, p. 59.

43 Deseriis: "On the Symbolic Power of Shared Pseudonyms" (2015), p. 59.

public'."[44] Publics are "recursive" when they become and remain possible through the explicit discussion of their material and discursive conditions of possibility. A comparable attention to the conditions of production of the very means of both communication and association – always considered two sides of a single problem – is present throughout the history of pamphleteering, one of whose defining features is perhaps an unbending focus on the articulation of publicity and communicational safety. Such an emphasis on the phatic dimension of communication must inflect the way scholars perceive these texts. As Kelty observes, any assertion as to the properties of a specific communicative setting (such as the "openness" of the Internet, or the "risks" posed by dissident statements) is "not an ontological claim" about the way this setting *is* "so much as it is a hermeneutic and prescriptive one that is focused on maintaining a particular moral order, or if it proves absent, a plan for achieving it."[45]

We must therefore consider the unavoidably metapoetic, metacommunicational, and metapolitical dimension of pamphletary literature: when pamphleteers write, they are also always writing about the legal, habitual, and communicational norms that prohibit them from writing using non-pamphletary media. This feature crystallizes as an ethical problem for literary theorists, who must consider the way their work participates in the High Modernist program of instituting "legibility" precisely where loopholes, silences, anonymity, lapses, in a word, *illegibility*, fulfills both an aesthetic and a political function.

This problem has been the object of sustained attention in disciplines concerned with communication among disenfranchised populations. (What, for instance, is the political cost of spelling out "encrypted" or "disguised"[46] communication among peasants in the Global South to highly educated audiences in developed nations?) While the pamphlet has been associated with resistance to state centralization and surveillance since the mid-eighteenth century as the main socially sanctioned form of collective authorship, more recent examples abound. These cases not only reveal the fragile foundations that pamphletary literature provides to such forms of political agency, but also the concrete political stakes literary criticism and theory must explicitly consider whenever they participate in instituting legibility in place of functional opacity.

In 2008, 303 Chinese dissident intellectuals signed the "Charter 08" manifesto. The text – one of the great liberal statements of the twenty-first century – demanded the end of one-party rule, the separation of powers, an independent judiciary, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, free markets, and the guaranteeing of human rights in Mainland China.[47] One of the conditions of possibility of such demands in the context of a highly centralized authoritarian state was a multiplication of signatories and, in turn, a blurring of

44 Christopher Kelty: "Geeks, Social Imaginaries, and Recursive Publics", in: *Cultural Anthropology* 20/2 (2005), pp. 185–214, p. 185.

45 Kelty: "Geeks, Social Imaginaries, and Recursive Publics" (2005), p. 200.

46 James C. Scott: *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven: Yale University Press (1990), pp. 136–182.

47 The original text was translated into English by Perry Link and is available on the website of *Reporters sans frontières*, https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/Charter08.pdf.

authorial responsibility. While the text of the Charter was not attributed to any author in particular, Chinese authorities banned the pamphlet hours before the text's publication, arresting at least seventy of the original signatories, subjecting some to torture, and singling out writer Liu Xiaobo as the main author of the Charter. Liu Xiaobo was sentenced to eleven years' imprisonment, during which time he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize – with the Nobel Committee awarding the prize to an empty chair in Oslo. Did Liu Xiaobo actually write the Charter? The question is moot, given that the assemblage of enunciation that undersigned the text was produced as a collective body of authors by Chinese dissidents. The enforcement of legibility by a centralized state therefore came at the cost of making this enforcement itself the object of international public attention, a catastrophe in a society whose cultural norms strictly prohibit "airing the family's dirt outside" (家丑往外扬).[48] The Nobel Committee, on the other hand, acted recklessly, despite Liu Xiaobo's unquestionable merits as an author and political actor: the Prize brashly undersigned the reductive attribution of the Charter to its most prominent co-author.

POWER, PRESSURE

Pamphletary power is officious, para-institutional, and elusive as a scholarly object. Identifying and classifying agential relationships between polemical texts and sociopolitical effects remains a vexing enterprise in all but the few cases where a *single* pamphlet became the point of focus of a given public or counterpublic. How then can a theory of pamphletary agency be derived from the general historical processes outlined above, especially if we want to provide more robust answers than the formulaic tropes that have marked much of the scholarship on the pamphlet? Theories of factional power, that is, theories of the kind of power that derives from "pressure groups," have in fact suffered an appalling contraction in the wake of the hegemonic Foucauldian imaginary in the humanities. What used to be a lively intellectual tradition raging from Otto von Gierke to Émile Durkheim has given way to the most analogical of arguments. Let me then briefly return to a pre-Foucauldian paradigm and to a particular observation made by Mancur Olson in *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965) in order to grasp one of the particularities of pamphletary power. Olson famously noted that ordinary pressure groups are usually a "by-product" of other, more central activities:

> [...] large economic groups with significant lobbying organizations [...] are also organized for some other purpose. The large and powerful economic lobbies are in fact the by-products of organizations that obtain their strength

48 Pitman B. Potter, Sophia Woodman: "Boundaries of Tolerance: Charter 08 and Debates over Political Reform", in: *Liu Xiaobo, Charter 08, and the Challenges of Political Reform in China*, ed. by Jean-Philippe Béja, Fu Hualing, Eva Pils, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press (2012), pp. 97–118, p. 111.

and support because they perform some function in addition to lobbying for collective goods.

The lobbies of the large economic groups are the by-products of organizations that have the capacity to "mobilize" a latent group with "selective incentives." The only organizations that have the "selective incentives" available are those that (1) have the authority and capacity to be coercive, or (2) have a source of positive inducements that they can offer the individuals in a latent group.[49]

We can think of pamphleteers and their readers as *pamphletary groups* , i.e., as partisan groups that use polemical literature as a political vector. Pamphletary groups arguably deny Olson's highly influential theory in an interesting way. They are usually neither secondary to a common primary activity, nor do they have the capacity to coerce social actors into participation. They do, however, mobilize support by the distribution of positive inducements, ranging from the association with socioethical or cognitive goods (usually: associating with groups acting for "justice," "fair- ness," "equality," etc.) to the obtention of material or legal goods (usually: associating with groups campaigning for better wages or the acquisition of rights). Pamphletary groups therefore function as "pressure groups" *without having the capacity to back up promised incentives other than through the potential success of their enterprise*.

This, in turn, raises an interesting question of political heuristics: Under which circumstances would such a wager be reasonable for social agents? In which cases would the chance of obtaining promised incentives outweigh the risk of associating with a pressure group that cannot effectively guarantee the distribution of these incentives *ex ante*? One way to approach this question is to turn to game theory and its distinction between "common knowledge" (first introduced by David Lewis in 1965)[50] and "mutual knowledge" (first introduced by Stephen Schiffer in 1972).[51] In this seminal distinction, knowledge is said to be "common" when all agents know a proposition, when they all know that they all know this proposition, when they all know that they all know that they all know this proposition, *ad infinitum*. By contrast, knowledge is said to be "mutual" when all agents know a proposition, but do not know that all others know this proposition. Hence all common knowledge is also mutual knowledge. The reverse is not true.

I would argue that this distinction sheds light on a fundamental feature of the pamphlet as a vector of political power. In effect, the chance of obtaining promised incentives would only plausibly outweigh the risks of associating with a factional counterpublic when and only when agents can also reasonably assume that the *mutual* knowledge grounding their partisanship is also *common*knowledge. In other words, the incentive to support a factional proposition is dependent on the capacity of social agents to imagine this proposition as

49 Mancur Olson: *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2002), pp. 132–133.

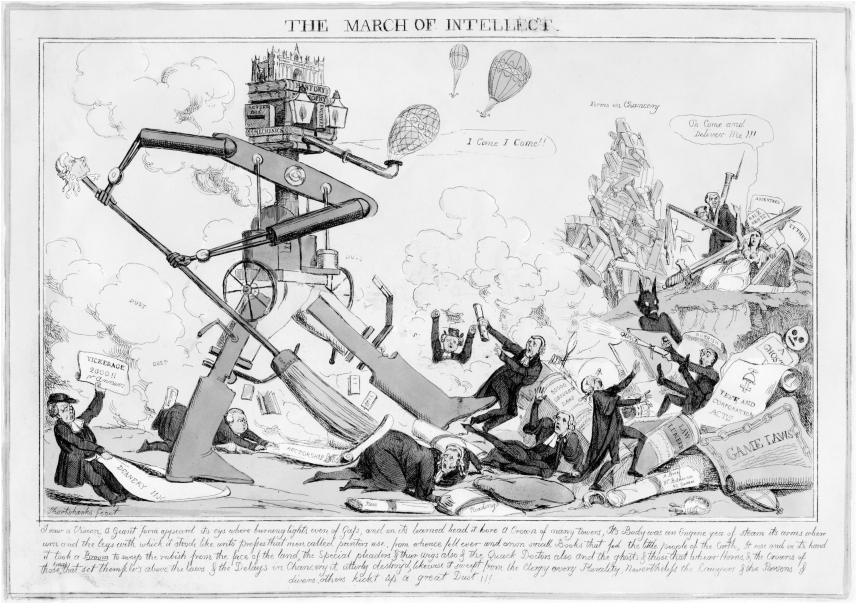
50 David Lewis: *Convention: A Philosophical Study*, Oxford: Blackwell (2002).

51 Stephen Schiffer: *Meaning*, Oxford: Clarendon Press (1972).

a *potentially majoritarian* one, i.e., on their capacity to know that other social agents base their partisanship on the same knowledge, and that these agents know that all other social agents know that all other agents base their partisanship on the same knowledge, *ad infinitum*. For a factional proposition to become *plausibly incentivized*, social agents must have the capacity to assume that this proposition is common knowledge (and therefore a "potentially majoritarian" proposition at least to the degree that it may be considered "common"). Once more, and to phrase it in another disciplinary lexicon, pamphletary groups become efficacious pressure groups when they successful undermine what social psychologists call *pluralistic ignorance*, i.e., the mistaken belief that others do not share one's knowledge or beliefs.In fact, we have already discussed the major vector by which pamphlets convert mutual knowledge into common knowledge: they do so by circulating. I must insist on a crucial precision at this stage: circulation is not only an infrastructural and communicational event, but also a political and aesthetic one. By circulating, pamphlets make it plausible for social agents to assume that other social agents know that other social agents know, thereby making it plausible for social agents to assume their knowledge to be common knowledge, further mitigating the risks of associating with a (hitherto plausibly minoritarian) pamphletary group. In this sense, pamphlets acquire and produce political "pressure" or power by circulating *as* plausible grounds for political universalizations.[52] As such, the political power exerted by pamphlets can be understood as "pressure" against Power (because they make the commonality of mutual knowledge plausible to previously isolated, "pluralistically ignorant" social actors) and, in a nicely paradoxical fashion, as a sort of psycho-political "relief" for social agents themselves (as pamphletary circulation mitigates the anguish of pluralistic ignorance).

Additionally, this inherently political function of circulation further explains the efforts of police forces to control and mitigate the circulation of pamphletary materials: circulation makes political commonality plausible to all. It is therefore not pamphletary "knowledge" (or partisan "content") that is the primary object of state control, but rather the knowledge that knowledge about pamphletary "knowledge" is common to hitherto disparate social actors. Rather than gesturing toward literature's performative ability to create "the real," and rather than mythologizing the pamphlet's power to make history, we can now return to the rather humble, concrete "universality" that is plausible in the pedestrian terms of a literary-polemical event. There can be no question here of accessing universality in the literal, totalizing sense: pamphlets are predicated on the disunion and partition of the body politic. What the aesthetic experience of polemical literature does give access to, however, is a sense of the fragmentary,

52 David Bebnowski establishes connections between pressure and pamphlets on the grounds of the semantic overlap between "pressure" and "the press", as well as with respect to the German homonym "Druck" ("printing," "printed matter," "pressure"). David Bebnowski: "Mit Druckerzeugnissen Druck erzeugen: Flugschriften als Quellen für die Intellectual History der Neuen Linken als Konfliktgeschichte", in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 48/1 (2023), pp. 163–194. Also see his essay in this volume: "Pressing Social Orders."



2 Pressure, Power. Robert Seymour, *The March of Intellect* (ca. 1828), London: British Museum.

partial "kind of social totality"[53] that is brought into being by virtue of being addressed. In the context of polemical events, then, Kantian *sensus communis* is not common to all, but only common to some: whenever *sensus communis* refers to a "merely possible" (§40) universality *and* whenever a polemical text "contributes to the possibility of the entire body"[54] by hypothesizing a universality found to be plausible and desirable by other agents (§65), social actors may plausibly assume pamphletary propositions to be "common," but not universal.

53 Warner: *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002), p. 50.
54 Kant: *Critique of Judgement* (2007), p. 203.

REPRODUCING FREDERICK DOUGLASS

DUSTIN BREITENWISCHER





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Dustin Breitenwischer: "Reproducing Frederick Douglass", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 83–96.

"I shall never have his voice for my phonograph..."
Frances E. Willard: *Letter to Helen Pitts Douglass* (1895)

VOICE

When Ida B. Wells-Barnett traveled to England in June 1894, she took copies of Frederick Douglass's pamphlet *Lessons of the Hour* with her. In a letter she informs Douglass that she "could have disposed of hundreds if I had them," adding that some of her "London friends wish to know if you will give them permission to republish it on this side, so they can circulate it."[1] Wells-Barnett is most likely referring to the elaborately designed pamphlet published by Thomas & Evans, Baltimore, whose cover page bears the title of the lecture along with Douglass's name, the venue at which Douglass held the lecture, the publisher's name, and, placed at the center, a sketched copy by an unknown artist (with the initials C. H. W.) of a photograph from 1882 taken by John Howe Kent in Rochester, New York.[2]

In the nineteenth century, it was common for public orators such as Douglass to publish and distribute lectures in the form of printed pamphlets that would at times even circulate internationally. Such pamphlets served as souvenirs, educational texts, propaganda, and above all as the speakers' printed mouthpiece, with which they would spread their messages beyond the auditorium. Focusing on the history of African-American pamphleteering in particular, the editors of the anthology *Pamphlets of Protest* show that Black orators "often polished their sermons or speeches, turning them into pamphlets," arguing that the written texts started "with orality."[3]

The following focuses on the shift from spoken to printed word, from oratory to the act of reading, in Frederick Douglass's practice of pamphleteering. I argue that Douglass's pamphlets not only started with orality but ultimately sought to result in orality – to allow his readers to hear him speak – thus turning the pamphlet into the central part of an intricate media transformation from spoken word to written text to acts of public or private reading and vocal reiteration.[4] Of course, Douglass was not a traditional pamphleteer. He hardly ever wrote pamphlets, but produced scripts for lectures, which were then reproduced in print. These dozens of pamphlets, which were either commissioned by Douglass himself or printed after requests from supporters, can be understood as recording

1 Ida B. Wells-Barnett: "Letter to Frederick Douglass, Frederick Douglass Papers: General Correspondence, 1841–1912; 1894, June–July", in: Library of Congress, www . loc . gov / item / mss1187900123/.

2 For a brief history of the image, see John Stauffer, Zoe Trodd, Celeste-Marie Bernier (eds.): *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century's Most Photographed American*, New York: Liveright (2018), pp. 62–63.

3 Peter Newman, Patrick Rael, Philip Lapsansky: "Introduction: The Theme of Our Contemplation", in: *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African-American Protest Literature, 1790–1860*, ed. by Peter Newman, Patrick Rael, Philip Lapsansky, New York: Routledge (2001), pp. 1–31, p. 3.

4 I want to thank John Stauffer and Maurice Wallace for helping me conceive this idea in its earliest stages.

devices intended to reproduce Douglass's oratory and to invite the readers to reenact the events and actively participate in Douglass's aesthetic education of reform.

During his lifetime, Douglass's extraordinary voice and eloquence were emphasized by his physical presence and the theatricality of his language. The pamphlet became a surrogate for Douglass, seeking to accommodate the absence of its unique origin, of the here and now of the original speech, of Douglass's presence in the room, i.e., of his aura. Clearly cherishing the role of being *the* generational voice, Douglass's pamphleteering already highlighted the rift between aura and reproducibility, which Walter Benjamin would go on to explore in an unmatched fashion. The pamphlet thus navigated a path between the speech's "unique existence in a particular place" and the threat that its reproduction may "devalue the here and now."[5] Douglass's reform activism required reproducibility, and both the actual oration and the succeeding pamphlet were reproducible media, the one being repeatedly performed on tour, the other being a print publication. Yet whereas the speaker certainly reproduces the act of speaking, each performance is unique; the same lecture can never be held in the exact same way. The pamphlet, in contrast, is a medium of print reproduction, distributed by the hundreds, reaching each reader in a comparable material condition and turning readers into distributors, as the opening example of Ida B. Wells-Barnett shows.

RECORDING

After Douglass died in February 1895, friends and followers celebrated the voice that "rang out in every part of this country," as Francis J. Grimké noted in his memorial service address.[6] For more than five decades, Douglass toured the United States (and parts of Europe) to deliver countless speeches and lectures. Wherever he went his voice "rang out," and whoever was part of the audience could enjoy Douglass's eloquence and theatricality. Given the technological circumstances of his time, Douglass's voice could only travel when he traveled. Radio still needed to be invented and although the technology was already in place, an audio recording of Frederick Douglass's voice was most likely never produced, even though the older Douglass celebrated the invention of the phonograph. In a letter in 1894, after he listened to a phonograph recording for the first time, Douglass wrote that he found comfort in the idea that "though being dead and turned to dust a man's voice may yet live and speak."[7] So, the notion of the ringing voice should not be brushed aside as mere adulation, for it centers on a media aesthetic twist indicative of Douglass's visionary career as orator, reformer, and public persona. As if he anticipated Grimké's remark, Douglass, toward the end of *Lessons of the Hour*, imagines what he would say, could he, at

5 Walter Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility [1936]", in: *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch, New York: W. W. Norton & Company (2018), pp. 976–996.

6 Reprinted in: *In Memoriam: Frederick Douglass*, Philadelphia: John C. Yorston & Co (1897), p. 177.

7 Frederick Douglass: *Lessons of the Hour*, Baltimore: Thomas & Evans (1894).

that very moment, not only address the attending audience but in fact "be heard by this great nation."[8] His entire career as reform activist was marked by a sense of urgency and a celebration of confrontation and immediacy, and "he desired nothing more than that his spoken and written voice would survive infinitely for humankind."[9] His prophetic vision always had to be able not only to impact the present but to stand the test of time. Reform, both in rhetoric and action, needed to be palpable; it needed to erupt, endure, and thus capture audiences across space and time. For this to happen, Douglass relied on an intricate network of lectures, autobiographical accounts, literary narratives, newspaper editorials, correspondence, photographs, and pamphlets. Yet in order to engage further with the idea of the travelling voice, particular attention needs to be paid to the transformation from lecture to pamphlet, from spoken to written word, from the act of listening to the act of reading.

In his "Letter from the Editor," published in *The North Star* on November 23, 1949, Douglass recapped an anti-slavery convention and famously declared:

> *Speech! speech!* the live, calm, grave, clear, pointed, warm, sweet, melodious and powerful human voice, is his chosen instrumentality. The pen is not to be despised, but who that knows anything of the might and electricity of speech as it bursts from hearts of fire, glowing with light and life, will not acknowledge the superiority over the pen for immediate effect. Astronomy, Zoology, Botany, Conchology, Chemistry, and Geology, are fit subjects for the pen, but humanity, justice and liberty, demand the service of the living human voice, and the power of exalted eloquence, as their expedient.[10]

Here, Douglass does not merely advocate phonocentrism to celebrate speech as a more adequate means than writing to present oneself to the world. With a wink, he uses the editor's pen to stress the importance of speech as an analogy for the speaker's physical presence. Unlike Derrida's critique of phonocentrism as a logocentric overvaluation of "*presence*," Douglass's call to use the voice in order to demand "humanity, justice and liberty" zeroes in on the historically specific need for abolitionist speakers at this particular place in time to make their presence felt, to invade public spaces, and to transform listeners into fellow activists.[11] Douglass, the Black orator, was convinced that speech would "let slavery present its brazen front" while "slavery is a poor orator when confronted by an abolitionist."[12] Douglass is not invested in the philosophical quarrel over phonocentrism but in the political and, as such, highly performative act of confrontation.

8 Douglass: *Lessons of the Hour* (1894), p. 36.

9 David W. Blight: *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*, New York: Simon & Schuster (2018), p. 752.

10 Frederick Douglass: "Letter from the Editor", in: *The North Star* (November 23, 1849), p. 2, p. 2 (emphasis in the original).

11 Jacques Derrida: *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press (1997 [1967]), p. 12 (emphasis in the original).

12 Douglass: "Letter from the Editor" (1849), p. 2 (emphasis in the original).

In his celebration of speech, the blossoming orator still relished the experience of meticulously studying Caleb Bingham's *The Columbian Orator*, this "rich treasure," which he bought for fifty cents as a teenager in Maryland.[13] The young Frederick Douglass (then Frederick Bailey) knew that literacy was the path to freedom and speech would become the ultimate means to confront the oppressor. Accordingly, Douglass notes, Bingham's book "enabled me to give tongue to many interesting thoughts, which had frequently flashed through my soul, and died away for want of utterance," it taught him to turn the ability to read and write into the art of oratory and to re-form words on paper into a spectacle.[14]

MOVEMENT

Given the tenacious training in his youth, the famous orator wanted his audiences and his readers to be *moved*. Whether emotionally, intellectually, morally, or physically, Douglass turned affective, aesthetic, and intellectual movement into the prerequisite for all social and political reform movements. Yet how could a print publication, the pamphlet in particular, do justice to this elaborate principle? Even though it could not possibly afford its readers the extraordinary experience of listening to a lecture, it nonetheless allowed for a performative mode of reception. Part of which relies on the pamphlet's function to produce and connect a public. In Douglass's case, pamphlets usually grew out of the public experience of lectures, only to be distributed in print to say, yet again, "Hello, public!," as Michael Warner stresses, and to call out to the reader, "I need your voice!"[15] When the editors of *Pamphlets of Protest* note that Henry Highland Garnet, editor of the 1848 edition of David Walker's *Appeal*, actually "never met Walker," that he "never heard his voice – except in the pages of the man's pamphlet,"[16] they allude to the pamphlet as a cross-media phenomenon that allows the written word to transcend into the sphere of aurality. The performative act of what might best be described as "voicing the pamphlet" is as old as the pamphlet itself. Considering the historical overlap of limited literacy and the pamphlet's emergence as a printed and reproduced medium across sixteenth-century Europe, a pamphlet was never merely to be read; it always desired and required to be voiced and listened to. And Douglass understood the pamphlet's inherent performativity as well as anybody. In his career, the pamphlet quickly became an integral part of a four-step media transformation that consists of (1) Douglass's oratory as public performance, (2) the records of public reception (i.e., accounts of Douglass's performance on stage), (3) the publication and distribution of the speech's print version in the form of a pamphlet, and (4) the act of reading the pamphlet and thereby reenacting and ultimately reproducing Douglass.

13 Frederick Douglass: "My Bondage and My Freedom [1855]", in: *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr., New York: Library of America (1994), pp. 103–452, p. 225.

14 Douglass: "My Bondage and My Freedom [1855]" (1994), p. 226.

15 Michael Warner: *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York: Zone Books (2005), p. 7 (emphasis in the original).

16 Newman, Rael, Lapsansky: "Introduction" (2001), p. 1.

PERFORMANCE

After his flight from bondage, Douglass joined the anti-slavery movement and ultimately became an orator on the abolition lecture circuit. His self-confidence and his commitment to rhetoric and eloquence notwithstanding, at the beginning of his career as an abolitionist (who was, in legal terms, still a fugitive slave), Douglass feared listening to Black speeches as much as he dreaded raising his own voice in a predominantly white environment. In a testimonial for the Reverend John W. E. Bowen in August 1891, less than four years prior to his death, Douglass reflects upon what may best be described as the cultural and social history of Black American speech. He addresses Bowen directly: "Sir: – There was a time in my life when I dreaded to hear a man of color rise to speak in the presence of white people. I feared that he would supply added proof of our ignorance and inferiority. That day is past."[17] Douglass recalls a time when the hegemonic weight of white supremacy made him anxious at the very idea of public Black utterance, a time when "he had not dreamed of the possibility of becoming a public advocate," a time when he would "only whisper in private," as he writes in *My Bondage and My Freedom*.[18] Telling the story of his inauguration as a public speaker, Douglass argues that he himself suffered from "the utmost difficulty that I could stand erect, or that I could command and articulate two words without hesitation and stammering. I trembled in every limb."[19] To make oneself heard and listened to publicly was not part of Black social life, in the South or in the North, but it became the essence of his desire to forge a community of letters that would excel in the intricacy of speaking and listening, of writing and reading. The author of three bestselling autobiographies and a literarily respectable novella, Douglass would indeed become one of the most prolific writers of his time, but his early experiences as a public speaker strengthened his belief in the superiority of the spoken word, which would remain unabated until the end of his life. For Douglass, the immediate connection between orality and aurality, between his act of speaking and the audience's capacity to listen, produced a particular sensation, an aura perhaps, which could not be matched by the experience of reading a printed text – at least when the latter was not a work of literary art but was concerned with matters of social and political reform.

Reform activism needed to be palpable, calls for change needed to be heard and they needed to be *voiced*, and performances in an auditorium allowed for just that. Douglass's "oratorial style, even to gestures and dramatic pauses, was taken from Bingham's instructions."[20] Bingham and the great orators of Western history taught Douglass that nuances, tiny shifts and changes in pronunciation

17 Frederick Douglass: "Great is the Miracle of Human Speech: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., On 31 August 1891", in: *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One, Volume 5*, ed. by John W. Blassingame, John R. McKivigan, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (1992), pp. 474–477.

18 Douglass: "My Bondage and My Freedom [1855]" (1994), p. 363.

19 Douglass: "My Bondage and My Freedom [1855]" (1994), p. 364.

20 Dickson J. Preston: *Young Frederick Douglass*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (2018 [1980]), p. 115.

and enunciation, as well as attention to posture and facial expressions played a part in creating, capturing and cultivating audiences. Reform needed to be orchestrated and orchestration depended on a highly sensitive balance of emphasis and restraint, action and passion. In short, Douglass treated reform as a performative art form, which could not solely rely on the often solitary experience of reading in silence. Yet Douglass's oratory did not merely unfold in the forcefulness of his eloquence; he repeatedly stressed the power of oratory as a complex performance in which mind and body, intellect and physical presence, needed to act completely in sync.



1 Unknown, *Frederick Douglass* (ca. 1877), Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress.

Public performances, i.e., the act of engaging a public in the spell of one's presence, needed to become a "total experience,"[21] as John Blassingame notes. Douglass was constantly honing the theatricality of his public performances, so much so that his second wife, Helen Pitts Douglass, thought her husband was trying to make a point when he fell to his knees during a conversation on a February evening in 1895, when in fact he was dying. Throughout his public and private life, Douglass relished moments in which an audience "became as much excited

21 John W. Blassingame: "Introduction to Series One", in: *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One, Volume 1*, ed. by John W. Blassingame, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (1979), pp. xxi–lxix, p. xxv.

as myself,"[22] and he relished face-to-face confrontation, of which his celebration of oratory performances is as indicative as his love affair with photography.

IMAGE

In the logic of the "total experience," Douglass wanted not only to be heard but also seen – seeking to make his presence felt, both in the moment and beyond it. In the 1860s, Douglass became more and more obsessed with the question of how to democratize public action and social reform, and he turned this question into a media-historical exploration. In practice and theory, Douglass was fascinated with the technology of early photography. He had his portrait taken more than 150 times, ultimately becoming the most photographed American in the nineteenth century, all the while attending to media-theoretical lectures on the cultural history and future of human picture-making as an aesthetic practice of reform.[23] The nationwide distribution of his photographic images, Douglass believed, could eventually forge a community of reform and resistance. Seven decades prior to Benjamin's paradigmatic analysis of the matter, Douglass was already touching upon the social dynamics of media reproducibility. While his speeches and articles had been circulating in auditoriums, households, schools, and offices for some time, Douglass was intrigued by the idea that photography would eventually allow massively reproduced pictures of social leaders, not least his own likeness, to likewise circulate and accompany the pieces of writing. In 1870, he writes in a letter to his friend, the printer Louis Prang,

> Heretofore, colored Americans have thought little of adorning parlors with pictures [...] Pictures come not with slavery and oppression and destitution, but with liberty, fair play, leisure, and refinement. These conditions are now possible to colored American citizens, and I think the walls of their houses will soon begin to bear evidence of their altered relations to the people about them.[24]

The reproduction of his photographic portrait, as seen below on one of the walls of Howard University's law library around 1900, would mediate the message of the respective sitter, and since, as Douglass was persuaded, it could not be compromised by the white gaze, it would adequately represent the reformers in their absence. And Douglass demanded that his audiences – his readers as well as the

22 Douglass: "My Bondage and My Freedom [1855]" (1994), p. 364.

23 See *Picturing Frederick Douglass* (2018). On the relationship between pictures and political progress in African-American cultural history, see Maurice O. Wallace, Shawn Michelle Smith (eds.): *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African-American Identity*, Durham: Duke University Press (2012); on Douglass, pictures, and aesthetic freedom, see Dustin Breitenwischer: "Creative Democracy and Aesthetic Freedom: Notes on John Dewey and Frederick Douglass", in: *REAL* 34 (2018), pp. 47–63.

24 Frederick Douglass: "Letter to Louis Prang [1870]", in: *The Chromolithographs of Louis Prang*, ed. by Katherine M. McClinton, New York: Potter (1973), p. 37.



2 Unknown, *Howard Univ., Washington, D.C., ca. 1900 – Law library* (ca. 1900), Washington, D.C: Library of Congress.

viewers of his photographs – endure his at times unforgiving presence. His fascination with the possibilities of media reproduction lends a curious aesthetic and sociopolitical dynamic to his pamphleteering. Douglass was not just Douglass, but "Douglass," a product of the public imagination, an idealized persona, an idol. "He had used the power of the word (and of his own voice) to write himself into public existence. He continually revised and redefined himself through language," thus "updating his public image."[25] And he had not only "developed above all a literary identity, a man of words spoken and written," but was transformed in the public imagination into a quasi-literary character.[26] Quite frankly, Douglass had developed an aura. He appeared, to use Benjamin's definition of the term, to be "the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be."[27] Douglass was an auratic spectacle, equipped with aesthetic qualities comparable to a work of art. Over the course of his public career, this exemplary representative of his race (as he was regarded during his early days on the abolition circuit) became a "representative man" in the Emersonian sense, an exceptional figure in the art of reform. His books may not have reached every household, his voice may not have been

25 John Stauffer: *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2004), p. 45.

26 Blight: *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (2018), p. 88.

27 Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility [1936]" (2018), p. 980.

heard in every town, and his likeness may not have adorned every parlor, but his image traveled well beyond the bookshelves, auditoriums, and studios, affording him an ever-growing presence on both sides of the Atlantic.

READING

Since Douglass's speeches were often more than two hours long, reading them in pamphlet form was an evening-filling event. But aside from their excessive length (their "discourse time," to use a narratological term), the genre of the pamphlet relies on a peculiar temporality, being "both a medium of the moment – allowing protesters to publish quickly their views – and a substantial document that could stand the test of time."[28] The success of a pamphlet therefore depended on it simultaneously having an immediate and a lasting impact. The pamphlet addresses and activates the reader as a spatially and temporally (today even historically) distant member of an implied audience with a shared cause, turning any place of reception into an auditorium, and thereby creating an "aural space,"[29] as Erika Fischer-Lichte argues, via the act of reading.

"Friends and Fellow Citizens" – the readers of Douglass's *Lessons of the Hour* are being spoken to and thus instantly become an integral part of the media transformation from speech to writing to reenactment. So, in order for it to be and remain an impactful part of a larger reform movement, the given lecture must not exhaust itself in the immediacy of the live event. It needs the pamphlet, which is able to reactivate, at least to some degree, the speech's performativity. The success of such a reactivation depends on three interrelated elements: the printed text, certain elements of what may best be described as the pamphlet's paratextual environment (an adequately designed cover page, newspaper coverage, eyewitness reports of the lecture, etc.), and a willingness on the part of the readers to turn the act of reading into an event-like reenactment, in which they cast off the limiting position of recipients of the text and become active orators of the speech. Comparable to the process of a theater production (as the transformation of a text into a performance), the success of such a reactivation depends on the ability of text, paratext, and reader to give presence to the voice of the absent orator.

Adding to his celebration of speech in the late 1840s, Douglass, like many other orators and writers at the time, was undoubtedly aware that "print carried black voices through space and time: space, so that a broader national community of black leaders and white citizens could see African-American arguments; and time, so that subsequent generations of black as well as white readers could refer back to African-American documents."[30] After all, it was his ability to read and thus engage with the print culture of the day that had freedom appearing "to disap-

28 Newman, Rael, Lapsansky: "Introduction" (2001), p. 2.

29 Erika Fischer-Lichte: *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, London and New York: Routledge (2008), p. 122.

30 Newman, Rael, Lapsansky: "Introduction" (2001), p. 4.

pear no more," as he tells the readers of his *Narrative*.[31] In turn, reading Douglass's pamphlets was often a communal event. As David W. Blight has shown with regard to *Lessons of the Hour*, the lecture's pamphlet circulated among workers at the Record and Pensions Bureau of the War Department, "[p]atients gathered in the District of Columbia Homeopathic Hospital to read the speech," "entire families were discussing the speech," and "[h]is granddaughter Estelle Sprague wrote to tell Douglass that at the school in which she taught in Virginia the entire student body gathered on a Sunday to listen to the young teacher read aloud."[32] It is fair to assume that before and after *Lessons of the Hour*, hundreds of similar gatherings were taking place across the nation.

On the one hand, of course, such communal reading events were necessary simply because the rate of illiteracy in the Black population was still high;[33] but on the other hand, those events also created the idea of an audience whose members would treat the pamphlet as an oral and aural medium. Due to the illiteracy of the enslaved men and women on Georgia plantations, abolitionist and pamphleteer Harrison Berry went so far as to have slave owners read aloud passages from his pamphlets.[34]

The poetic language of Douglass's lectures virtually demanded to be read out loud, as if it was indeed poetry, and one can only imagine how students, families, co-workers, friends, and loved ones gathered around the reader of the given pamphlet to take in Douglass's words, listening to the reader and imagining how the great orator enunciated, paused, and gestured. If we trust the reports of his contemporaries, the mere material existence of the printed words of Douglass's pamphlets, the pale presence of printed words on paper, could no longer do justice to the more expansive experience of these communal or solitary receptions that were taking place in a culture fully accustomed to the power and the nuances of lecturing and pamphleteering as social and aesthetic practices. The power of the lecture and the power of the press generated the "power of publicity."[35] And Douglass's publicity was almost unmatched in the nineteenth century. Stories about his lectures, descriptions of his voice and posture reached every corner of the reform-oriented parts of the United States, so that readers of his pamphlets were acutely aware of and had their readings shaped by Douglass's aesthetics,

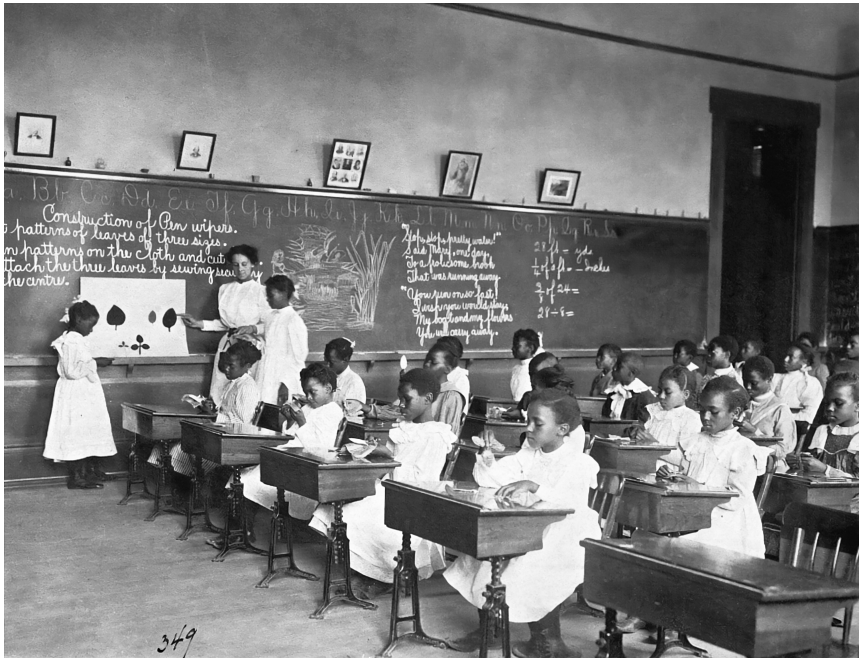
31 Frederick Douglass: "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written By Himself [1845]", in: *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr., New York: Library of America (1994), pp. 1–102, p. 43.

32 Blight: *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (2018), pp. 747–748.

33 Although literacy among the Black population grew steadily between the end of the Civil War and Douglass's death in the mid-1890s, in 1870, roughly eighty percent, in 1890, 57.1 percent, and in 1900, 44.5 percent of Black Americans were illiterate. See: "Story Behind the Number: Literacy and Lynchings", in: *NPR – All Things Considered*, https://www.npr.org/2006/02/04/5189912/story-behind-the-number-literacy-and-lynchings (February 4, 2006); and Walter F. Willcox: "The Negro Population", in: *Negroes in the United States*, ed. by S.N.D. North, Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census (1904) (= Bulletin 8), pp. 11–99, online: https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/03322287no8ch1.pdf.

34 Clarence L. Mohr: "Harrison Berry: A Black Pamphleteer in Georgia During Slavery and Freedom," in: *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 67/2 (Summer 1983): pp. 189–205.

35 Joad Raymond: *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2003), p. 160.



3 Frances Benjamin Johnston, *African American Schoolgirls in Classroom, Learning to Sew* (ca. 1899), Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress.

his style of performance, and his theatricality. When a worker, a patient, or his granddaughter addressed their respective audiences with the words "Friends and Fellow Citizens," it was Douglass's voice that rang out.

REPRODUCIBILITY

In tone, rhetoric, and pictures, Douglass stressed the "power of imagination,"[36] urging his readers by virtue of his eloquence to make his total presence felt. Only then would the pamphlet become the embodiment of the voice and a surrogate for the performance. Despite his absence, he would be able to capture the room.

Remembering the late Douglass, Rev. Jeremiah E. Rankin, then president of Howard University, left us with an extraordinary description of Douglass's presence:

> Mr. Douglass had a commanding figure, a commanding presence, a commanding voice. In all these there is leadership. There was something more there. When he rose to his feet, when an audience saw that dignified and se-

36 John Stauffer: "Frederick Douglass, Photography, and Imagination", in: *Traveling Traditions: Nineteenth-Century Cultural Concepts and Transatlantic Intellectual Networks*, ed. by Erik Redling, Berlin: De Gruyter (2016), pp. 113–138, p. 134.



4 Unknown, *Hon. Fred. Douglass on platform in [the] Pavilion* (26 March 1892), Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress.

> rious but kindly face, that venerable and seer-like aspect, when they heard that voice, it arrested attention and hushed everyone to silence and expectation. Utterance with him was the considerate and judicious gathering of great forces; like the gathering of a storm in the sky; now and then a distant mutter, then the marshaling of the winds and the sweeping of the clouds across the horizon; then the descending thunderbolt and the lightning flash; then the rolling back of the clouds as a curtain, the return of the sunshine and the song of birds and the laughter of children. Mr. Douglass' voice was of unequaled depth and volume and power.[37]

Returning to the idea of the "total experience" then, the success of Douglass's reform activism depended on the success of the reproducibility of the media transformation, of creating an auratic experience after "devaluing" the aura. Against the backdrop of this conundrum, Douglass's voice and words (and images) follow a complex choreography that wants to transform listeners and readers into agents of reform – they need to be activated and become active. And the pamphlet needed to be able to cater to its readers' affects almost as effectively as did Douglass's unique oratory.

Readers of Douglass's *Lessons of the Hour*, for example, whether facing a group of listeners or reciting the text to themselves, needed to will into existence

37 Reprinted in *In Memoriam: Frederick Douglass* (1897), p. 32 and 35.

the rhythm of his sentences ("Prison walls and iron bars"), the disturbingly melodic sequences of alliterations ("blood," "blindly," "boldly"; "press," "platform," "pulpit"), the confrontational and simultaneously inclusive manner of address ("*I* will tell *you*, and *I* venture to say that if *our* hearts"), the captivating imagery ("bullets in their pockets, treason in their hearts, broad blades in their blood stained hands"), the irony and sarcasm of rhetorical questions ("Can the negro be a citizen?," "Can the negro be educated?," "Can the negro be a soldier?"), and the perpetual enforcement and reinforcement of emphasis (more than twenty paragraphs open with "Now," "Again," or "But").[38] With his pamphlets, Douglass sets his readers a challenging task, for they must create a legitimate listening experience that, while able to echo the experience of hearing Douglass speak, is certainly unable to match it. The intricacies of language and rendering forge an auratic relationship between the one who speaks and the one who listens, having an immediate and often lasting effect.

Toward the end of his life – when he had become the most photographed American of the nineteenth century and when, as the *Chicago Tribune* noted, "No man, black or white, had been better known for nearly half a century in this country" – Douglass's career reached the pinnacle of what had, for the longest time, been "in some way a marketing operation."[39] The distribution and circulation of pictures and pamphlets allowed him to reach a wider audience with the messages of his lectures and thus cater to a performative act of reception that revolved around the highly esteemed power of the imagination and his understanding of reform as a socio-aesthetic movement. In the spirit of the performativity of the self, the pamphlet itself must be understood as a medium of reform, given that its existence is based on the transformation, i.e., the material *re-forming*, of a speech performance into a printed text and that its purpose lies in the ensuing transformation from written text to spoken word. As a medium of reform activism, the pamphlet is a recording and reproducing device that allows for the reenacted presence of the speaker and the constitution of communities across space and time. In reproducing Douglass, the pamphlet does not merely want to be read, but it seeks to be heard.

38 Douglass: *Lessons of the Hour* (1894), pp. 5, 4, 6, 6 (emphasis added), 11, 36.

39 Reprinted in: *In Memoriam: Frederick Douglass* (1897), pp. 296–297; Blight: *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (2018), p. 747.

BORN-TRANSLATED MANIFESTO

STEFANIE KREMMEL





This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Stefanie Kremmel: "Born-translated Manifesto", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 97–111.

The Communist Manifesto was first published in German as the *Manifest der kommunistischen Partei* in London in 1848. It was drafted by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels for the League of Communists. The thirty-page document describes the role of communists in society by outlining the historical genesis of bourgeois society and the need for a communist movement, and sets this communist movement apart from various other socialist currents. The text has become the prototype for manifestos, a milestone in the history of pamphlets and one of the founding texts of a powerful political ideology. Marx and Engels eschewed the form of catechism they had initially considered in favor of a powerful narrative. Their combination of analysis and call to action is what distinguishes this text from previous political proclamations and revolutionary pamphlets entitled "manifesto". They did not merely proclaim subversive ideas or recount history, they aimed to make history. *The Communist Manifesto* fulfills all the main criteria of a political manifesto: a clear programmatic stance, often of a political group or party, an explicit address to the public, opposition to the status quo and a call to action.

Its growing success after its first "boom" toward the end of the nineteenth century is attributed to different factors: the quality of the text itself and its international horizon, the growing popularity of the authors, the success of *Capital* (vol. 1 was published in 1867 in German, in 1872 in French, in 1884 in English), as well as the development of the workers' movement and its parties and infrastructure, starting with the foundation of the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) in 1864. The text's transculturality as a condition of its dissemination is a very prominent point of reference. Still today, the fact that it was published in six languages from the start – at least this is what was announced – and that it has been translated countless times since is often used as evidence of its importance.

Zooming in on its transcultural features, the *Manifesto* can be characterized as a *born-translated* pamphlet that grew through the addition of prefaces to different languages. With an increasing number of versions and translations[1] that are related to one another in various ways, we can come to understand the *Manifesto* as a multilingual web of texts. This study differs from the existing, extensive works on the translation history of the *Manifesto*, because the aim is not to reconstruct and document translation events or identify or create the most accurate or "best" translation, but rather to show how translation and other transcultural elements form part of pamphletary practice.

BORN TRANSLATED

The prototype of translation is that of an interlingual process, where a source text is converted into a target text. But translation processes can involve more than two languages; translations are not only target texts but can serve as source texts as two or more language editions can together form the source text for a new translation, and so on. These aspects of translation have long been understood as minor

1 See the extensive bibliography of editions and translations by Bert Andréas: *Le manifeste communiste de Marx et Engels: histoire et bibliographie 1848–1918*, Milan: Feltrinelli (1963).

phenomena or not studied in depth in translation studies. But when it becomes clear that translations do in fact function as originals and are central to the creation of a transcultural discursive space, this has far-reaching consequences for the status traditionally ascribed to originals versus translations.

To study the translation history of the *Manifesto* and identify events and forms that go beyond the static and linear ideas on knowledge transfer and set categories such as originals as source texts for translations or a set target culture, a transcultural research approach seems appropriate because it focuses on the entanglements and ongoing shifts in cultural processes.[2] Rebecca Walkowitz's concept of *born translated* focuses on text-inherent features and literary innovation.

> [...] [M]any novels do not simply appear in translation. They have been written for translation from the start. Adapting a phrase for artworks produced for the computer ('born digital'), I call these novels *born translated*. [...] [B]orn-translated literature approaches translation as medium and origin rather than as afterthought. Translation is not secondary or incidental to these works. It is a condition of their production.[3]

Going one step further, the creation of other language editions can be considered a means of monitoring the relationship between different versions and paratexts as the text is disseminated more and more. The concept, then, is a valuable tool when it comes to describing and tracking the role of translation in the creation and make-up of the *Manifesto* and studying its transcultural and translational elements.

The Communist Manifesto takes up universal topoi, such as oppression, that transcend national, linguistic, and cultural borders. It appeals directly to readers as proletarians of all countries: It addressed the "Proletarians" (1850 translation by Helen Macfarlane) or "Working Men" (1888 translation by Samuel Moore) of all countries. The political vision of the League of Communists and of Marx and Engels was to unite the struggles of workers throughout Europe and beyond and translation was the necessary vehicle to reach this goal. The preamble shows the (idealized) self-image of the League of Communists, its motives and goals. It closes with the mention of the six European languages in which the *Manifesto* was to be made available. The need for the text to appear in different languages was already a given for the initiators; the text did not have to "prove itself" in German before someone considered or was tasked with translating it into further languages. German does not get any special placement as the original language and is listed in third place, in the German edition as well as subsequent translations:

2 Larisa Schippel: "Between Consensus and the Dissolution of Boundaries: On the Transculturality of Communicative Action", in: *Chronotopos – A Journal of Translation History* 1–2 (2020), pp. 237–251; Julia Richter: *Translationshistoriographie: Perspektiven und Methoden*, Berlin: Frank & Timme (2023), pp. 94–97.

3 Rebecca L. Walkowitz: *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, New York: Columbia University Press (2015), p. 3.

> Zu diesem Zweck haben sich Kommunisten der verschiedensten Nationalität in London versammelt und das folgende Manifest entworfen, das in englischer, französischer, deutscher, italienischer, flämischer und dänischer Sprache veröffentlicht wird.[4]
>
> To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London and sketched the following manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.[5]

Martin Puchner sees Marx and Engels' strategy of creating a text more international than any capitalist world literature could ever become as their intent to erase the conception of the original altogether.[6] However, producing various language editions of one text was not a singular occurrence, but rather an effective and necessary tool for the pair. In the 1860s and 1870s, in the so-called First International, "official" versions of statutes and provisions were drafted in English, French and German and published nearly simultaneously, with Marx and Engels being actively and prominently involved. The simultaneous or near-simultaneous creation or publication of a text in more than one language has a long history, particularly in the legal and institutional sphere in multilingual societies and in international relations. In international treaty law, different language versions together form one "legal instrument" – they are all considered authentic originals.[7] One could therefore conclude that all six language versions announced in the preamble together form the *Manifesto*.

PHANTOM TRANSLATIONS

Its set-up as a born-translated text did not immediately lead to multiple translations. The gap between the announcement of six language editions and the reality of dissemination was wide. The first published translations of the *Manifesto* were: Swedish (1848), English (1850), Russian (1869), Serbian (1871), French and Spanish (1872), and Portuguese (1873). These editions had fairly limited circulation. Other languages followed in the 1880s. There are other documented translation efforts that did not result in publication, most famously that of Engels working on an English draft and at least two drafts of French translations written by comrades in Paris.

Retrospectively, however, these features bolstered the narrative of the *Manifesto's* relevance. The mention of the six languages was shared and printed countless times, decades later, with a rising interest in the text. Early on, in 1872, the

4 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, Berlin: Dietz (1965 [1848]), p. 3.

5 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, trans. by Samuel Moore, Moscow: Progress Publishers (1977 [1888]), p. 39.

6 Martin Puchner: *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (2006), p. 56.

7 Theo Hermans: *The Conference of the Tongues*, Manchester: St. Jerome (2007), pp. 8–9.

authors themselves declared that the *Communist Manifesto* was a historical document that they would not update. Therefore, the preamble stood unchanged, and the announcement was reprinted and repeated in its original form over and over. These five announced translations evolved into what Hal Draper has called "phantom translations".[8] Friedrich Engels himself contributed to the spreading of the idea that the *Manifesto* had been translated early on. In his preface to the authorized English edition, he alluded to four translations, even though only one, the English one, had actually been published:

> Drawn up in German, in January, 1848, the manuscript was sent to the printer in London a few weeks before the French revolution of February 24th. A French translation was brought out in Paris, shortly before the insurrection of June, 1848. The first English translation [...] appeared in [...] London, 1850. A Danish and a Polish edition had also been published.[9]

Still today, references like these can be found in paratexts of all kinds.[10] The *assumed* existence of these translations in part overwrote the actual events. The image of it being multilingual and international from the beginning was in keeping with the reputation of the *Manifesto* for being a text that would later become available in countless translations and contribute to political movements all over the world.

Between 1872 and 1893, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels authored seven prefaces to the *Manifesto* for different language editions (German [1872], Russian [1882], German [1883], English [1888], German [1890], Polish [1892], Italian [1893]), in an attempt to provide readers with the historical context needed to understand it as a historical document, and at the same time to convincingly demonstrate that it was relevant and not outdated.

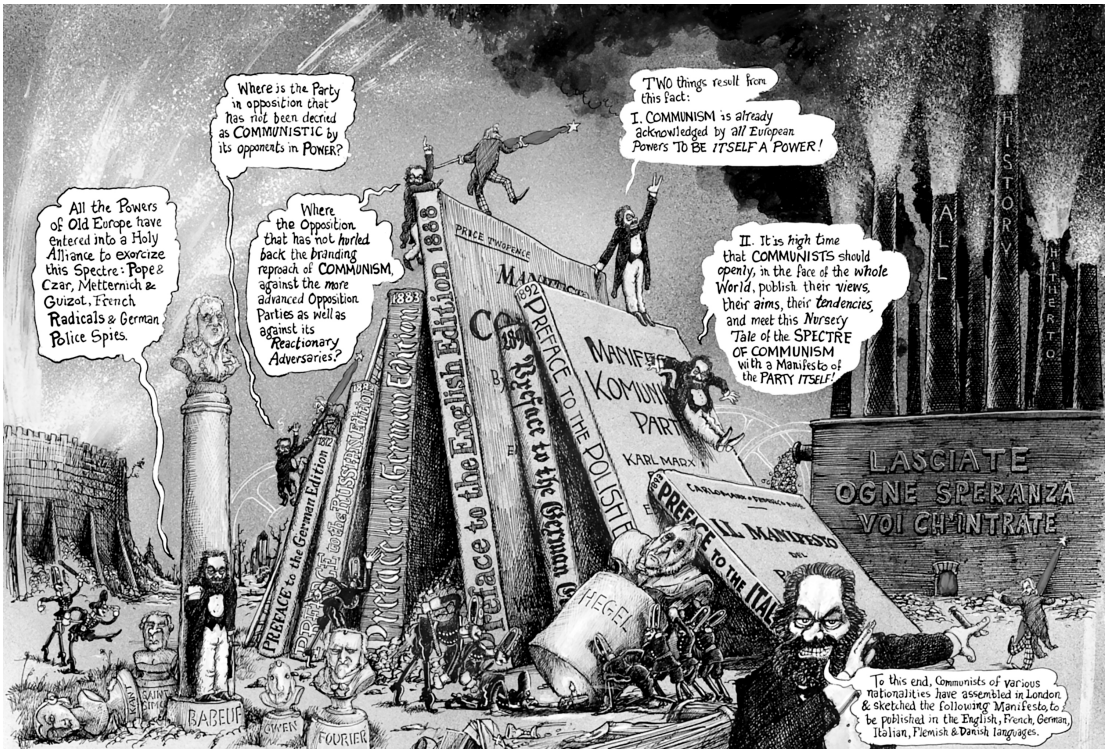
The text grew with the addition of the authors' prefaces. Depending on the format and purpose of a publication, different prefaces were added and often had to be translated separately, sometimes from a language that was different to the rest of the text. The prefaces are therefore material proof of the internationality of the movement and thought. They reinforce the transcultural and translational aspects of the *Manifesto*, linking different language editions with each other. The prefaces also discuss projected and published translations as well as failed translation endeavors. The translation history of the text is related to the power of the text and the strength of the Communist movement:

> First of all, it is noteworthy that of late the Manifesto has become an index, as it were, of the development of large-scale industry on the European

8 Hal Draper: *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, Berkeley: Center for Socialist History (1994 [1984]), p. 80.

9 Friedrich Engels: "Preface to the English Edition of 1888", in: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, ed. by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Moscow: Progress Publishers (1977), p. 15.

10 For example: Dirk J. Struik (ed.): *Birth of the Communist Manifesto: With Full Text of the Manifesto, all Prefaces by Marx and Engels, Early Drafts by Engels and other Supplementary Material*, New York: International Publishers (1971), p. 67.



1 Marx and Engels climb over books representing all the prefaces the authors wrote for different language editions of the Communist Manifesto, while Marx recites the preamble. In: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*, adapted by Martin Rowson [Graphic Novel], London: SelfMadeHero (2018), pp. 13–14. Reproduced by permission of selfmadehero. Artwork © Martin Rowson.

> continent. In proportion as large-scale industry expands in a given country, the demand grows among the workers of that country for enlightenment regarding their position as the working class in relation to the possessing classes, the socialist movement spreads among them and the demand for the Manifesto increases. Thus, not only the state of the labour movement but also the degree of development of large-scale industry can be measured with fair accuracy in every country by the number of copies of the Manifesto circulated in the language of that country.[11]

TRAVELING MANIFESTO

Translation is of course a powerful tool of dissemination, but some other, lesser discussed effects of translation have particular relevance for the genre of political texts, namely the framing and re-positioning of the text. Through translation, texts can be reframed and the choices made by a translator or an editor, e.g., changes in the title, the addition of explanatory notes, omissions or the usage of certain terminology, prepare it for a local context or audience. These choices can establish a new discourse or be the reason for differences in reception in different (language) audiences that rely on different editions of the text, as the case of the first published English translation of the *Manifesto* and its later appearances will show.

With the February Revolution of 1848 in Paris, the proclamation of the Second French Republic, and the subsequent uprisings and revolutions, the political structures that the *Manifesto* was written for were partly abandoned or destroyed and circulation halted. Engels himself later argued that due to the social conditions, the time was not yet ripe for a wider dissemination of the *Manifesto*. Nonetheless, an English translation appeared in London in 1850.

Two years after it had first been published in German, an English translation of the *Manifesto* was printed in four installments in the British newspaper *Red Republican* in 1850. It was translated by Chartist journalist and activist Helen Macfarlane (1818–1860). Macfarlane and the newspaper's editor, George Julian Harney, were acquainted with Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, which is why it is widely assumed that they acted with the approval of the authors. Harney was a prominent figure in Chartism and wanted to steer the working-class movement that had been fighting for reforms, union building and the expansion of voting rights in Great Britain toward a more socialist agenda. With a few simple measures, Harney and Macfarlane managed to contextualize the text temporally and spatially, presenting it as a text by a group of *German* communists that Chartists could learn from.

11 Friedrich Engels: "Preface to the Polish Edition of 1892", in: *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Moscow: Progress Publishers (1977), p. 33 (first published in 1892, translated from German).

> The following Manifesto, which has since been adopted by all fractions of German Communists, was drawn up in the German language, in January 1848, by Citizens Charles Marx and Frederic Engels. It was immediately printed in London, in the German language, and published a few days before the outbreak of the Revolution of February. The turmoil consequent upon that great event made it impossible to carry out, at that time, the intention of translating it into all the languages of civilized Europe. There exist two different French versions of it in manuscript, but under the oppressive laws of France, the publication of either of them has been found impracticable. The English reader will be enabled, by the following excellent translation of this important document, to judge of the plans and principles of the most advanced party of the German Revolutionists. It must not be forgotten, that the whole of this Manifesto was written and printed before the Revolution of February.[12]

The text was titled *Manifesto of the German Communist Party*, and the short introduction by Harney explained that the *Manifesto* could not be translated into various languages right away due to the turmoil of the February Revolution and the oppression the movement faced. He also instructed readers to consider the historical moment in which the text was written.

The introduction of the *Manifesto* is deeply ingrained in our cultural memory: *"Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa. Es ist das Gespenst des Kommunismus."*[13] With some time having elapsed, the way Macfarlane chose to translate the introduction catches the attention of readers and critics alike: "A frightful hobgoblin stalks throughout Europe. We are haunted by a ghost. The ghost of Communism."[14] Especially in contrast to the English version from 1888, which is so well known and widespread: "A spectre is haunting Europe. The spectre of Communism."[15] The "frightful hobgoblin" was Helen Macfarlane's clever solution to the problem of translating the German "Gespenst" since it carried two meanings: the haunting ghost, but also the eerie creature children were told would come and get them if they did not behave.[16] The translator's footnotes also shed light on her decision-making. Here she explained her choice of words, such as opting for "Shopocrat-socialism," a term established in Chartism, for "Kleinbürgerlicher Sozialismus." This translation was tailored specifically to the needs of the Chartist

12 George Julian Harney: "Editorial introduction to Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: German Communism: Manifesto of the German Communist Party (Published in February 1848)", in: *Red Republican* (November 1850).

13 Marx, Engels: *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (1965 [1848]), p. 3 (Facsimile edition).

14 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: "German Communism: Manifesto of the German Communist Party (Published in February 1848)", trans. by Helen Macfarlane, in: *Red Republican* (November 1850), published in four installments.

15 Marx, Engels: *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1977 [1888]), p. 39 (first published in 1888, translated by Samuel Moore).

16 David Black (ed.): *Helen Macfarlane: Red Republican – The Complete Annotated Writings*, London: Unkant (2014), p. xxiii; David Black: *Helen Macfarlane: A Feminist, Revolutionary Journalist, and Philosopher in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England*, Lanham: Lexington Books (2004), p. 94.

movement and to a British audience in its bid to inform them about the German emigrants' socialist ideas. Macfarlane and Harney chose to omit most of section IV, which describes the ongoing struggles in different countries. This section was already somewhat out of date two years after it was published. As political activists, they were also careful not to print passages about revolutionary events that would put them in danger of state action and repression.

Helen Macfarlane was first named as the translator by Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx in their preface to the second German edition in 1872. After initially praising the translation, recommending and sharing it, the authors criticized it heavily and worked toward a retranslation years later. When they encountered the translation later on, its origin was not stated anywhere. Perhaps more importantly, twenty to thirty years had passed, and it was therefore often unclear to readers, including Marx and Engels, that the version in question was Macfarlane's work. The authors did not recognize the translation, but rather assumed it was a new version and thought of it as quite defective, as Hal Draper described in his *Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*.

Over twenty years after its first publication, Macfarlane's translation was reprinted in New York, in a weekly newspaper edited by sisters Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin, who filled its pages with feminist and socialist content. Victoria Woodhull was a leading figure in the US suffrage movement and a co-founder and active member of the English-speaking Section 12 of the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) in New York. Shortly thereafter she was expelled, after being accused of abusing the organization for her campaign for US president in 1872, as well as various political and strategic quarrels with other North American sections dominated by German and Irish Americans. Marx, approving of the expulsion, referred to her as a "banker's woman, free-lover, and general humbug."

A newly written editorial note tied the *Communist Manifesto* to the IWA. The translator's notes by Macfarlane were included, but the translator remained anonymous. There was no information on or discussion of the translatory nature of the text; the editorial note simply announced the *reproduction* of the important document: "The manifesto we reproduce is a valuable document, and if for no other end than its preservation, we are glad to give it room in our pages."[17]

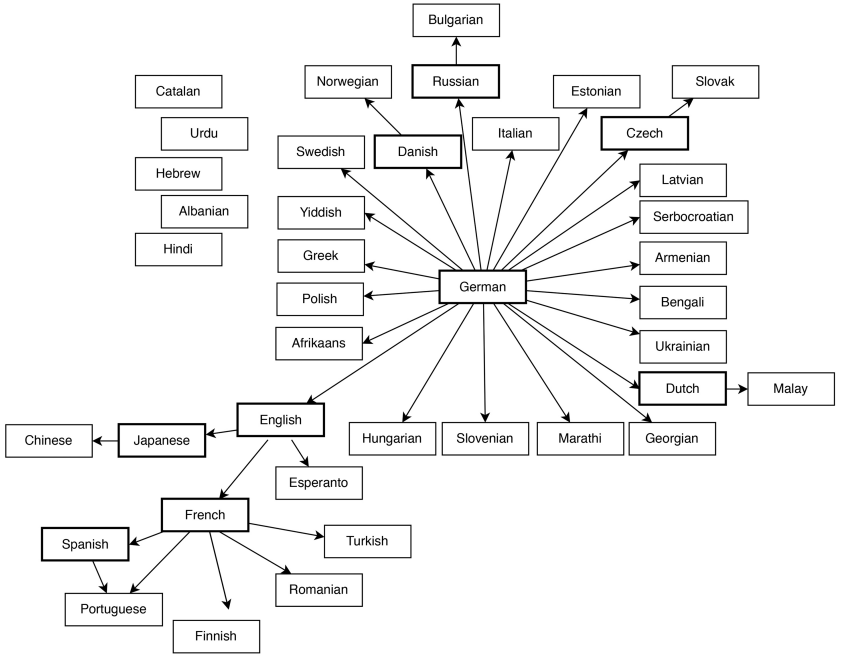
Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly had a circulation of around 20,000 copies. About fifty copies were sent to Friedrich Engels, who used it to promote the IWA, but at the same time complained about "Woodhull's English" in letters to his friend and comrade Friedrich Adolph Sorge.[18] The edition was not recognized (anymore) as Macfarlane's translation. Engels later classified it as a "retranslation." For lack of any other printed edition, he shared and disseminated it despite his complaints, and it was used as the source text for various translations.

17 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: "German Communism – Manifesto of the German Communist Party", in: *Woodhull And Claflin's Weekly* (December 30, 1871), p. 3.

18 Friedrich Engels: "Letter from Engels to Friedrich Adolph Sorge in Hoboken, 17.3.1872", in: *MEW (Marx-Engels-Werke)*, vol. 33, Berlin: Dietz (1976), pp. 432–433; Engels: "Letter" (1976), pp. 537–541.

A CHAIN OF TRANSLATIONS

Indirect translations – translations based on a source text which is also a translation – connect different language editions and therefore translations with each other. By drawing on each other, they create a web of texts. The history of the *Manifesto* is rich in indirect translation events. The reasons for this vary: the German text was not available; the translator did not speak German; there was a rich tradition of importing knowledge and texts into Spanish via French, to name but a few. The radial diagram gives a first impression of how common this practice is by presenting the variety of languages that have served as source languages for just the first translation of the *Manifesto* into a specific language.



2 Radial diagram showing the source and target language of 43 first language editions of the Communist Manifesto.

Macfarlane's translation, in the form of the *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* edition, played a key role in the production of translations into different Romance languages. It served as the source text for a French translation, which in turn led to other translations. Just three weeks after the edition in *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* was published, a French translation was printed in the French-language New York newspaper *Le Socialiste*. Seven months later, a Spanish version based on this French edition was published in Madrid's *La Emancipación* newspaper

in November 1872, followed by a Portuguese translation based on the Spanish edition, published a few months later in Lisbon's *O Pensamento Social* in March of 1873.[19]

These translations were produced in quick succession to each other. The main motives for local editors and translators, as well as Engels, who was involved in and aware of these translation events, were of an organizational nature rather than any aspiration to disseminate the text more widely. They needed to fill the pages of the newspapers of the Madrid and Lisbon sections of the IWA and make sure that the central and founding documents of the IWA were formally available in these languages, while Marx and Engels and their comrades were under pressure as they faced struggles within the organization. The editors of *La Emancipación* regularly worked with French texts and *O Pensamento Social* often adopted content from *La Emancipación*. The *Manifesto* was treated like many other texts; what counted was to make the text available, and to do so quickly and efficiently.[20]

Even if the German edition was out of print, not available or of no use, dissemination in different languages continued. Around 1872, French was the relay language or lingua franca that boosted circulation (and continued to do so later on). After the authorized English translation by Samuel Moore (edited by Friedrich Engels) was published in 1888, it fulfilled similar functions. In the early twentieth century, Russian comes into play as a key language in the dissemination of the *Manifesto*. The practice of indirect translation and the compilation of a source text through different editions or added prefaces created the basis for a multilingual sphere of reference that is key for any international movement.

INCOGNITO – AN ASSUMED RETRANSLATION

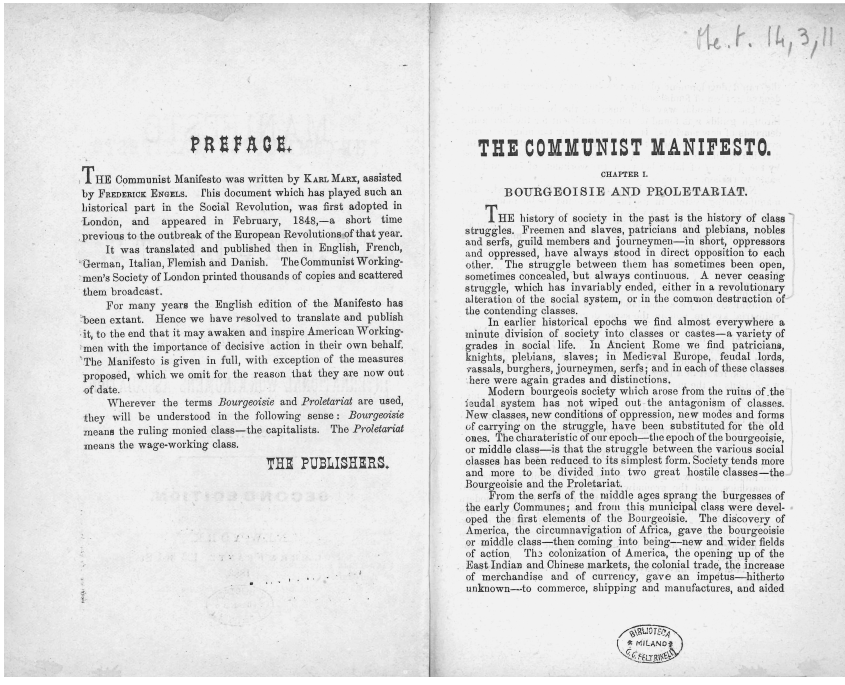
At a large memorial service in New York, shortly after Marx's death in March 1883, well-known anarchist and German emigrant Johann Most quoted from the *Manifesto* in his speech, not only portraying Marx as an anarchist but also portraying himself as the disseminator of Marx's ideas, entrusted by Marx to succeed him. Donations collected at the memorial service were to go toward the publication of an English translation of the *Manifesto*. Johann Most, together with Justus Schwab, another prominent figure of German-American anarchism, was charged with the project. What they published was, in fact, not a new translation, but a reprint of Macfarlane's translation in the *Woodhull & Claflin*'s Weekly edition, with a few changes made to reflect their taste.

19 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: "Manifeste de Karl Marx", in: *Le Socialiste* (1872), published in nine installments (20.1., 27.1., 10.2., 17.2., 24.2., 2.3., 9.3., 16.3., 30.3.); Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: "Manifiesto Comunista de 1848, procedido de un prologo de sus autores", trans. by José Mesa, Leompart], in: *La Emancipación* 72–77 (1872), published in six installment (2.11., 9.11., 16.11., 23.11., 30.11., 7.12.), pp. 3–4; Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: "Manifesto comunista", in: *O Pensamento Social* (1873).

20 For a detailed account see Stefanie Kremmel: *Der Lebenslauf der Übersetzung: Die Transkulturalität des Kommunistischen Manifests*, Vienna: University of Vienna (2022), pp. 126–127, 180–197.

This (undeclared) recycled translation was scrutinized and harshly critiqued by Most's opponents and critics. They criticized the framing of the text, the quality of the translation, and the omissions made. However, the fact that it was actually a thirty-year-old translation with a couple of changes was not noticed or discussed.

To promote the publication, Schwab had stated in an article that his group had already been working on the translation before Marx's death and that it was "as accurate a translation as possible of the original German text [...] produced by wage labourers" who were members of the IWA.[21] There is no evidence for this scenario, yet Schwab's statements are noteworthy in that they constitute the first instance of the question of ownership, of who would be a suitable translator, being raised.



PREFACE.

THE Communist Manifesto was written by KARL MARX, assisted by FREDERICK ENGELS. This document which has played such an historical part in the Social Revolution, was first adopted in London, and appeared in February, 1848,—a short time previous to the outbreak of the European Revolutions of that year.

It was translated and published then in English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish. The Communist Workingmen's Society of London printed thousands of copies and scattered them broadcast.

For many years the English edition of the Manifesto has been extant. Hence we have resolved to translate and publish it, to the end that it may awaken and inspire American Workingmen with the importance of decisive action in their own behalf. The Manifesto is given in full, with exception of the measures proposed, which we omit for the reason that they are now out of date.

Wherever the terms *Bourgeoisie* and *Proletariat* are used, they will be understood in the following sense: *Bourgeoisie* means the ruling monied class—the capitalists. The *Proletariat* means the wage-working class.

THE PUBLISHERS.

Me. f. 14, 3, 11

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO.

CHAPTER I.

BOURGEOISIE AND PROLETARIAT.

THE history of society in the past is the history of class struggles. Freemen and slaves, patricians and plebians, nobles and serfs, guild members and journeymen—in short, oppressors and oppressed, have always stood in direct opposition to each other. The struggle between them has sometimes been open, sometimes concealed, but always continuous. A never ceasing struggle, which has invariably ended, either in a revolutionary alteration of the social system, or in the common destruction of the contending classes.

In earlier historical epochs we find almost everywhere a minute division of society into classes or castes—a variety of grades in social life. In Ancient Rome we find patricians, knights, plebians, slaves; in Medieval Europe, feudal lords, vassals, burghers, journeymen, serfs; and in each of these classes here were again grades and distinctions.

Modern bourgeois society which arose from the ruins of the feudal system has not wiped out the antagonism of classes. New classes, new conditions of oppression, new modes and forms of carrying on the struggle, have been substituted for the old ones. The charateristic of our epoch—the epoch of the bourgeoisie, or middle class—is that the struggle between the various social classes has been reduced to its simplest form. Society tends more and more to be divided into two great hostile classes—the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat.

From the serfs of the middle ages sprang the burgesses of the early Communes; and from this municipal class were developed the first elements of the Bourgeoisie. The discovery of America, the circumnavigation of Africa, gave the bourgeoisie or middle class—then coming into being—new and wider fields of action. The colonization of America, the opening up of the East Indian and Chinese markets, the colonial trade, the increase of merchandise and of currency, gave an impetus—hitherto unknown—to commerce, shipping and manufactures, and aided

BIBLIOTECA MILANO G.G. FELTRINELLI

3 Preface and first page of Section I of the Communist Manifesto. [Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels:] *The Communist Manifesto*, published by the International Workingmen's Association, New York: Schaerr & Frantz (1883), pp. 30, p. 3–4.

Most's use of Macfarlane's translation is an example of a political group applying "translation as a means of ideological struggle," to quote Christina Delistathi,[22] through simple framing measures. Framing is an active process of signifi-

21 Justus Schwab in *New Yorker Volkszeitung* (8 June 1883), p. 4/IV–V, cited in Andréas: *Le manifeste communiste de Marx et Engels* (1963), p. 99.

22 Christina Delistathi: "Translation as a Means of Ideological Struggle", in: *Translation and Opposition*, ed. by Dimitris Asimakoulas, Margaret Rogers, Bristol; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters (2011), pp. 204–222.

cation, a strategic step deliberately taken to position a political movement or an argument in a certain perspective:

> Temporal and spatial framing involves selecting a particular text and embedding it in a temporal and spatial context that accentuates the narrative it depicts and encourages us to establish links between it and current narratives that touch our lives, even though the events of the source narrative may be set within a very different temporal and spatial framework. This type of embedding requires no further intervention in the text itself, although it does not necessarily rule out such intervention.[23]

We saw temporal and spatial framing by Macfarlane and Harney in 1850, who explained the relevance of the text to the reader, used imagery the readers could relate to, etc. Most's changes mostly consisted of omissions. He cut the ten-point program from Section II because, according to an *added* "translator's note," it was no longer up to date: "Here are a series of measures proposed, which are not applicable at the present time, as more radical measures are necessary (Translator's note)."

There were public objections to this omission on the part of German emigrants who were familiar with the *Manifesto*, and heated debates subsequently ensued. In addition to omissions, other interventions occurred: "Translator's notes" and Americanisms were inserted.[24] The most visible change concerned the title, which went from *German Communism – Manifesto of the German Communist Party* to *Manifesto of the Communists*, removing the reference a particular party of German origin as its basis. These interventions reinforced the impression that it was indeed a new translation. As did the editorial note: "For many years the English edition of the Manifesto has been extant. Hence we have resolved to translate and publish it, to the end that it may awaken and inspire American Workingmen with the importance of decisive action in their own behalf."[25]

A NEW IDEOLOGICAL HOME

What was so controversial about this edition? It was seen as a "hijacking" of Marx and Engels' work and names by anarchists. The framing of the text as a key document of anarchist groups was the trigger for criticism and rejection and although Engels later referred to this edition as "mutilated," the micro-level of the translation barely played a role in the debate. Hal Draper's well-known historical analysis of the English translation history of the *Manifesto* also fits this pattern, but has to be read with the author's Trotskyist viewpoints in mind: "Thus the English edition

23 Mona Baker: "Framing Narratives in Translation", in: idem: *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account*, London: Routledge (2006), pp. 105–140.

24 Andréas: *Le manifeste communiste de Marx et Engels* (1963), p. 98.

25 *Manifesto of the Communists: Published by the International Workingmen's Association*, New York: Schaerr & Frantz (1883), p. 2.

of the Manifesto was 'captured' as the property and instrument of the Mostite anarchist sect alone, with a distorted text, lies about the translation, and charges and countercharges flying about [...] to the delight of the antisocialist press."[26]

This edition has to be understood as one event in a years-long large-scale conflict between different socialist and anarchist groups. It was published during a time when Johann Most managed to unite different anarchist groups in the US and was gaining momentum, while Engels was working on strengthening other political groups.[27] A decade later, a similar event took place in Italy, when a translation of the *Manifesto* was published, translated, and introduced by anarchist Pietro Gori. Friedrich Engels was displeased. A new translation by Pompeo Bettini was published a year later and made reference to this by stating that it was the only Italian translation that was not a betrayal to the cause. Engels wrote a preface to a later edition of Bettini's translation.[28]

Still, the Most edition was an important milestone for the English *Manifesto* – it was the first separate edition of the text, which up until 1883 had only appeared a handful of times in newspaper installments or summaries. This edition was reprinted a couple of times and is also what led Engels to work with more urgency on a new, authorized English translation, which was finally published in 1888.

THE *COMMUNIST MANIFESTO* AS A TRANSCULTURAL PHENOMENON

Helen Macfarlane's English translation, its subsequent use and the discourse surrounding it bring into focus effects of and motives for translation beyond dissemination. Some of these features are particular to the field of political translation. Translations can become the venue where different actors within the counterhegemonic field negotiate their interpretations and political strategies. By making use of framing devices and other translation strategies or by evaluating and criticizing translations of others, schisms and struggles within parties, groups or communities come to the fore.[29] They bear witness to the symbolic and representative function of attaching one's name and group to a specific text such as the *Manifesto*.

The transcultural moment of the *Manifesto* reveals itself in the context of its creation in a multilingual emigrant association, the international character and idea of the text, the authors' attempt at simultaneous multilingual text production, the phantom translations that take on a (discursive) life of their own and the

26 Draper: *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto* (1994 [1984]), p. 72.

27 Tom Goyens: *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880–1914*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press (2007), pp. 97–98.

28 See Stefanie Kremmel: *Der Lebenslauf der Übersetzung: Die Transkulturalität des Kommunistischen Manifests* (2022), p. 131.

29 For case studies on the Greek and Turkish context in the twentieth century, see Christina Delistathi: "'He stole our translation': Translation Reviews and the Construction of Marxist Discourse", in: *Target* 2/29 (2017), pp. 201–221; İrem Konca: "The Turkish Retranslations of Marx's *Das Kapital* as a Site of Intellectual and Ideological Struggle", in: *Studies from a Retranslation Culture*, ed. by Özlem Berk Albachten, Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar, Singapore: Springer (2019), pp. 81–93.

authors' prefaces for different language edition. Indirect and compilative translation practices strengthen the relation between different language editions and are necessary to reach the primary goals of spreading the text quickly and at low cost.

Translation was not secondary or incidental to the *Communist Manifesto*, but a condition of its production. Applying the concept of *born translated* to describe its features has various theoretical effects. It counters the common narrative of translation as a process *subsequent* to the writing. This is closely connected to the status ascribed to translations, traditionally as inferior to what we understand as the original. The discipline of translation studies has already shifted the emphasis onto the pluralistic aspect of translation and challenged the qualitative distinction made between translations and non-translations.[30] This pluralistic viewpoint allows us to observe translation as a practice that takes different forms and relates to the so-called original or source text and to other translations in different ways. By focusing on translation as an element of genres like political manifestos and engaging with different publication formats and modes of production such as pamphlets and serialized translations in newspapers, we can reach a better understanding of the process of creation of a transcultural space of communication and knowledge.

30 Susan Bassnett: "Translators in Search of Originals", in: *Benjamins Translation Library*, ed. by Cecilia Alvstad, Annjo K. Greenall, Hanne Jansen, Kristiina Taivalkoski-Shilov, Amsterdam: John Benjamins (2017), pp. 119–129, p. 119.

AGENTS

PRESSING SOCIAL ORDERS

DAVID BEBNOWSKI





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

David Bebnowski: "Pressing Social Orders", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 115–127.

PAMPHLETS – COUNTERPUBLICS

In 1848, a wave of revolutions swept through Europe. Beginning in France in February and spreading throughout Europe from March on, the revolutions carried with them a belief in the power of popular sovereignty and national citizenship. The uprisings opened up avenues for different disenfranchised groups to voice political demands. Discussions about belonging, participation, and the extension of citizenship rights emerged and put the focus on those who had formerly been excluded. Rippling across the Atlantic, the revolutionary wave also had an impact in the United States and reminded Americans of the ideals of their own revolution of 1776.[1]

During these years, the seeds of different movements started to sprout. Workers set up the early institutions of the labor movement, and abolitionism was given a boost. Notably, women were beginning to enter the public sphere as a self-conscious political group. In Germany and the United States, this entrance into the public arena of politics was marked by the fabrication and publication of two pamphlets. On May 20, 1848, at the height of the German revolution, the writer Louise Otto-Peters (1819-1895) published her *Address of a Girl* [German: "Adresse eines Mädchens," D.B.] simultaneously in different newspapers in the state of Saxony and paved the way for a first women's movement in Germany. Almost two months later, at the momentous Seneca Falls Convention, which ran from July 19 to 20, the *Declaration of Sentiments* was first read aloud and subsequently turned into a pamphlet. Mainly authored by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902), the document and the convention are commonly seen as the foundation of the women's movement in the United States.[2]

It is not surprising that these pamphlets were published at the height of the revolutions of 1848. Pamphlets draw on conflicts, articulate contention, and put forward divisive political claims, all in a spirit of total commitment that is contemptuous of the middle ground. Pamphlets address the public at large, but are not written in a bid to get a favorable reception from all who read them. On the contrary, pamphleteers know that their writing will polarize the public and they set out to antagonize people, thus deliberately creating or at least deepening rifts in the public sphere. In other words – and playing on the similarity between the printing press and pressure – pamphlets *press* social orders. They apply political pressure and offer ideas by means of which societies might be (re)formed.[3]

The *Address of a Girl* and the *Declaration of Sentiments* both featured these characteristics. However, the texts differed markedly in their style, demands, and

1 Timothy Mason Roberts: *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press (2009).

2 Louise Otto-Peters: "Adresse eines Mädchens, an den hochverehrten Herrn Minister-Oberländer [1848]", in: *Frauenemanzipation im deutschen Vormärz: Texte und Dokumente*, ed. by Renate Möhrmann, Stuttgart: Reclam (1978), pp. 199–202; Elizabeth Cady Stanton: "Declaration of Sentiments [1848]", in: *National Park Service / The First Women's Rights Convention*, https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/declaration-of-sentiments.htm.

3 George Orwell, Reginald Reynolds (eds.): *British Pamphleteers, Vol. 1: From the Sixteenth Century to the French Revolution*, London: Allan Wingate (1948), pp. 7–18, Jason Peacey: *Politicians and Pamphleteers*, London, New York: Routledge (2016); Bernard Bailyn: *Pamphlets of the American Revolu-*

in the scope of their demands. Somewhat correspondingly, whereas the American women's movement immediately gained traction and was able to institutionalize itself, the German women's movement was stopped short by the state's reaction. In fact, if we consider the immediate repercussions of the *Address*, we might ask if the German pamphlet was successful at all.

By analysing these differences, my aim is to offer a conceptualization of the interplay between pressure and the press by means of a historical close reading of the pamphlets against the background of their respective locales and medial environments. This conceptualization will seek to differentiate between the resources, sources, and direction of pressure. First, as far as the resources of pressure are concerned, we need to identify the social forces exerting it. We have to turn inward and see pressure as a compressing force that consolidates collective actors. What kind of actors put forward pamphletary claims and reacted to the assertion of pressure? Regarding the sources, we need to interrogate the pamphlets on their content and their rhetorical force. What claims and argumentations were made and how were they presented in order to build pressure? Lastly, drawing on the antagonizing nature of pamphlets, with regard to the direction, we need to ask who the pressure was directed against. Who was the target of pamphletary accusations, and who did the authors think pressure needed to be exerted on?

It is by drawing on these important historical cases that I am able to empirically ground the theoretical argument at the core of this essay. I argue that the collectives that get mobilized by pamphlets and in turn apply pressure have to be regarded as counterpublics. The potential to mobilize counterpublics – or the lack thereof – can be seen as a condition of success for pamphletary claims and the formation of the women's movement. An analysis of the three dimensions of resource, source, and direction of pressure will help to explain the differences in content of the two pamphlets and these distinct dimensions will also offer insights into the different modes of reception in Germany and the United States.

RESOURCE

"As a critical term, [...] counterpublic signifies the collectives that emerge in the recognition of various exclusions from wider publics of potential participants, discourse topics, and speaking styles and the resolve that builds to overcome these

tion, Vol. I (1750–1765, Cambridge, MA: Belknap (1965); Karl Schottenloher: *Flugblatt und Zeitung: Von den Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1848*, Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann (1985 [1922]); Daniel Bellingradt: *Flugpublizistik und Öffentlichkeit um 1700: Dynamiken, Akteure und Strukturen im urbanen Raum des Alten Reiches*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (2011); Luc Boltanski: *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2011); Julian Hanna: *The Manifesto Handbook: 95 Theses on an Incendiary Form*, Alresford, Hampshire: Zero Books (2020); for an introduction to the relatedness of press and print in connection with the German term "Druck": David Bebnowski: "Mit Druckerzeugnissen Druck erzeugen: Flugschriften als Quellen für die Intellectual History der Neuen Linken als Konfliktgeschichte", in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 48/1 (2023), pp. 163–194; see also the working definition of pamphlets in the ERC project "The Arts of Autonomy", Pierre-Héli Monot: "Pamphlets", www.artsautonomy.net/research.

exclusions."[4] This quote by media theorist Robert Asen highlights the act of recognizing one's own exclusion from broader publics and the bid to overcome a feeling of marginalization as a collective effort. The seemingly inconspicuous act of recognizing demands closer attention, offering as it does an extension of theories of counterpublics. The problem with many such approaches, as Asen argues, lies in their focus on the objective fact of exclusion, which results in the ascribing of all too unifying identities to such counterpublics.

A description of the dynamics inherent to the creation of counterpublics demands an emphasizing of real, experienced history and the concrete motivations of people. Theories of the connection between pamphlets and its counterpublics must account for the more private notions of becoming aware of one's own exclusion as an individual. Reacting to this feeling is a precondition for joining forces with like-minded actors that effectively connects the most private spheres (mind) with more public ones (community, state/society).[5]

Pamphlets offer opportunities to study these dynamics of recognizing and organizing. Since counterpublics are also publics, their formation follows similar mechanisms. Pamphlets also address huge publics and the customarily noncommercially driven circulation that delivers them to their audiences lies beyond their control. Thus, the formation of counterpublics through pamphlets hinges on the susceptibility of their readers and offers a way to think about "popular philological" practices of reading and cognition.[6]

Michael Warner has theorized this mechanism by relying on Althusser's notion of "interpellation."[7] People feel spoken to by certain demands because certain predispositions make them responsive. This is exactly what recognizing an exclusion from the dominant public sphere means. An easily overlooked implication of this responsivity is that counterpublics are always in a sense already there and that they come into being under specific circumstances. In other words: counterpublics are not created, they get *mobilized*.

Counterpublics are a constant feature of feminist theory, often subverting male-centered distinctions between what is public and what is private. One such example is Nancy Fraser's oft-quoted concept of a "subaltern counterpublic sphere." According to Fraser, subordinated social groups in counterpublics generate counterdiscourses to the hegemonic public discourse. Even though they function independently of wider publics, their aim is to influence them. Seen in this light, counterpublics often serve as transmitters that strengthen certain standpoints and thereby enrich – and essentially democratize – public discourse in general.[8]

4 Robert Asen: "Seeking the 'Counter' in Counterpublics", in: *Communication Theory* 10/4 (2000), pp. 424–446, p. 438.

5 Mette Birkedal Bruun: "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé", in: *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, ed. by Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, Mette Birkedal Bruun, Leiden: Brill (2021), pp. 12–60.

6 See Pierre-Héli Monot's "Art, Autonomy, Philology: Research Parameters" in this volume.

7 Michael Warner: *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York: Zone Books (2002), p. 77.

8 Nancy Fraser: "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", in: *Social Text* 25/26 (1990), pp. 56–80, pp. 67–68; for a discussion of

Such "spill overs"[9] into public discourse are the goal of every counterpublic discourse. They are a result of the assertion of pressure by counterpublics and the responsiveness of wider publics. The confrontational stands pamphlets take in order to influence public discourse can be seen as indicators of the tension between particularity and universality proceeding from antagonisms within the demos. Seen from this angle, pamphlets are often media that express the demands of those who are excluded from political representation.[10] The assertion of (feminist) pressure on the broader public discourse thus relies on the mobilization of a counterpublic that is based on politicizing tenable social conflicts. Both the *Address of a Girl* and the *Declaration of Sentiments* were attempts to publicize conflicts and demonstrate the structural and political advantages and disadvantages of mobilization.

SOURCE

"Every event in history has a beginning, a middle, and an end; it just depends on where you pick up the thread and what story you choose to tell."[11] This quote by historian Lori Ginzberg points to the perpetual quest for origin stories and the almost unattainable goal of singling out incidents that gave rise to the women's movements. In fact, women did engage in politics by petitioning or supporting related movements, and also by publishing politically inciting literature well before 1848. However, the draftings of the *Declaration of Sentiment*s[12] [in the following "*Declaration*"] and the *Address of a Girl* [in the following "*Address*"] claim central roles in the history of the women's movement in the United States and Germany. As short, poignant, and ultimately easily accessible texts, they provided an early basis for feminist argumentations that people were able to come back to. In this sense, the texts enabled an intergenerational "communication without those present" that regenerated the movement over time.[13]

multi-dimensional concepts of publics and "partial publics" as analogous concepts to counterpublics Elisabeth Klaus, Ricarda Drüeke (eds.): *Öffentlichkeiten und gesellschaftliche Aushandlungsprozesse: Theoretische Perspektiven und empirische Befunde*, Berlin: De Gruyter (2017).

9 Charles Taylor: *Philosophical Arguments*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1995), pp. 279–280.

10 Jacques Rancière: *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1999); in line with this thinking, Rita Felski, on whom Nancy Fraser's work draws, offers a much more poignant relationship between publics and "subaltern counterpublic spheres" Rita Felski: *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1989), p. 166.

11 Lori D. Ginzberg: *Untidy Origins: A Story of Women's Rights in Antebellum*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2005), p. 5.

12 Rudolf Schlögl: *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, Paderborn: Konstanz University Press (2014).

13 For a critical discussion of the Declaration and the role of the Seneca Falls Convention, see Lisa Tetrault: *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848–1898*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2014); to gain an impression of the topicality of a pamphlet over a long period of time, see Pierre-Héli Monot: "The Book of Mozi: Chapter 39. 'Against the Confucians'", in: idem: *The Arts of Autonomy: A Living Anthology of Polemical Literature*, vol. 8, Munich (2023).

Drafted for the first Women's Rights Convention in the United States, the *Declaration* comprised lists of demands and resolutions much as other early feminist documents had done before it. What set the *Declaration* apart was its call for radical equality. Pointing toward the sources of pressure, the pamphlet voiced a combination of demands for universal suffrage, freedom to choose one's occupation, and female property rights. In addition, the document was resolute in style and rhetoric. Much of its power was derived from the decision to inscribe women into the "Declaration of Independence" of 1776. In doing so, the pamphlet followed in the footsteps of Olympe de Gouges' *Declaration of the Rights of Women*, which had been modeled on the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* of 1789. Especially within the revolutionary context of 1848, this outlining of disparities between men and women provided a formidable means of building pressure.

Regarding these characteristics, the familiar notion of "inscription" into history can be taken quite literally in the case of the Seneca Falls *Declaration*. Stanton and her co-authors adopted much of the preamble of the 1776 document while making small but decisive changes. In the second paragraph, the claim that all men were created equal was extended to include women, which made a big difference. Distinctly female demands were made manifest, signalling that women were no longer willing to be subsumed under the will of men. The last sentences of the preamble were subject to the most radical modifications and saw a transforming of the relationship between men and women into one of suppression and exploitation. The authors exchanged the political arena of formerly constitutional demands for questions of acknowledgement and followed up on this by replacing the source (King of Britain) and the object of oppression (states) with men and women:

> Such has been the patient sufferance of the *women under this government*, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand *the equal station to which they are entitled*. The *history of mankind* is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of *man toward woman*, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over *her*.[14]

The rhetorical brilliance of these maneuvers became apparent in the sixteen demands. Just as in the "Declaration of Independence," all of them began with the word "he" – which now meant that *all men* were accused indiscriminately. Thereby, without specifically mentioning the word, the *Declaration* outlined an early conceptualization of patriarchy. This willingness to antagonize readers gave the *Declaration* its pamphletary tone. The closing sentences made it clear that the authors were expecting to encounter hostility: The "great work before us" would be accompanied by "no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule." Having anticipated such rifts in the larger public, they aimed squarely at mobilizing a counterpublic. Ideally, the people who would gather to form this

14 Stanton: "Declaration of Sentiments [1848]". The italicized parts show the changes made to the *Declaration of Independence*. For a complete transcript of the latter, see: www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript.

resource of pressure would mostly be women, who were suffering under the "disenfranchisement of one-half the people of this country."

More than fifty years prior to the *Declaration*, the notion of an exclusion of half of the population from the public sphere had been popularized by Mary Wollstonecraft and other early feminists. It was also voiced in a similar way by Louise Otto-Peters in her *Address*. Scandalizing the race-to-the-bottom dynamics of wages under capitalist competition, she maintained that a raise in male wages alone would result in the "complete dependency" of women, who were largely not free to choose their occupation. Unavoidably, such a move would result in "declaring one half of mankind ["*Menschheit*," D.B.] as immature and as children."

To compare the foundational pamphlet of the American women's movement with the individually authored *Address* is to discover many differences. Louise Otto-Peters played on her social role as a woman to underline her commitment. As a well-known novelist and poet, she insisted that she had penned her request not in spite of being, but *because* she was a woman. The author described the lending of her voice to those who did not have sufficient courage to advocate for their own cause as her "holiest duty." Moreover, she concurred, albeit in a precautionary manner, that history "taught that those who forgot to think of their own rights were forgotten all together."

Otto-Peters' individual authorship as well as her confidence in being a voice for other women generated a pamphlet of a distinct format. The Saxon author drafted her text as an open letter, a form found throughout the history of pamphleteering. In fact, Émile Zola's *J'Accuse...!* (1898), one of the most influential pamphlets of all time, arguably marking the birth of the modern intellectual, was published in a newspaper as an open letter to the French president. Open letters have addressees and therefore clearly identify those who are responsible. And indeed this is exactly what the writer and poet had in mind with her *Address*.[15]

The main addressee of Otto-Peters' *Address* was the "esteemed minister [Martin, D.B.] Oberländer," who served as Minister of the Interior in the post-revolutionary liberal government in the German province of Saxony. Otto-Peters was thereby attempting to assert pressure on a political representative known to be sympathetic to social reforms aimed at ending the pauperization of large parts of the population. Aside from Oberländer, the document also called on the labor commission that had been installed by him as well as making a general appeal to "all workers." These addressees indicate that Otto-Peters was attempting to carve out a place for women in the labor movement that was about to take shape.

Just as the *Declaration* did, the *Address* expressed an astute sense of patriarchal domination that was supplemented with materialist criticism of conservative family models. After arguing that the working conditions of female workers were even worse than those of their male colleagues, Otto-Peters warned that the way out of this misery could not lie in an increase in male wages alone. This notion was expanded by the most polemical part of the *Address*, in which the early feminist

15 Pierre-Héli Monot: "Émile Zola: 'J'Accuse...!': A Commented Bilingual Edition, Including Contextual Sources and a Facsimile Copy of Émile Zola's Manuscript (Version 1.0)", in: idem: *The Arts of Autonomy: A Living Anthology of Polemical Literature*, vol. 1, Munich (2022), pp. 13–40.

argued in a materialist fashion that women would either marry and live unhappy lives with unhappy children or eventually resort to prostitution – which in turn meant binding women economically to the "vices of men" and further fostering their dependency.

But even if Otto-Peters drew conclusions that could be regarded as unnecessarily sexually explicit and imbued her reasoning with a confrontational edge, her pamphlet arrived at political conclusions that were decidedly tamer than those of the *Declaration*. Whereas the American women launched into a full-frontal attack on men and presented the authors as being prepared for strong reactions, Otto-Peters tried to win men over as allies. This writer made a concerted effort to forge a connection with organized labor, appealing to male workers to support her demands on rhetorical grounds: "... are these not your wives, sisters, mothers, and daughters, whose interests are to be protected just as well as yours?" Here, the source of pressure ultimately lay in *empathy*.

DIRECTION

The immediate local press coverage in the region surrounding Seneca Falls made it abundantly clear that the emerging reading public was indeed to develop in the highly antagonistic way that had been anticipated by the authors of the *Declaration*. Thus, the pressure extended outward in different directions and factionalized the public.

Many newspapers, along with those readers who had sent letters to their editors, wasted no time in rejecting the women's demands. The Rochester-based *Daily Advertiser* stated "no objections to a woman's *asserting* what her rights are, provided she stops there." The high-circulation *New York Herald* intuited that the women's demands would revolutionize society as a whole, and polemicized that "we do not see by what principle of right the angelic creatures could claim to compete" with men in different occupations. Others regarded the *Declaration* as the "most shocking and unnatural incident ever recorded in the history of women" or feared "the reign of petticoats." In at least one instance, Elizabeth Cady Stanton reacted staunchly against insinuations that the women's demands went against nature.[16]

These examples show that the women themselves were put under pressure by the male-dominated hegemonic public. As stated above, this sort of pressure has a part to play in the formation of counterpublics, in that it helps to consolidate collective actors. Referring back to the assumption that counterpublics are mobilized by drawing in those who already feel excluded and are able to identify with

16 See all these sources in: *Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers: Miscellany, 1840-1946; Scrapbooks; #1, 2 of 4*, mss41210, box 9, prepared by Susan B. Anthony, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/mss412100154; and *Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers: Miscellany, 1840-1946; Scrapbooks; On the Woman's Rights Convention [1848]*, mss41210, box 9, prepared by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/mss412100152.

certain claims, we can also trace this process in the reactions to and the immediate history of publication of the *Declaration*.

Shortly after the convention at Seneca Falls, the *Declaration* was published in a report on the conference. This report was printed in the offices of the abolitionist newspaper *The North Star*, which was edited by Frederick Douglass in Rochester, New York. The former slave and public intellectual had also attended the meeting and was the likely author of an article on the convention.[17] This connection to the anti-slavery *North Star* underlines the fact that abolitionism and the political networks of abolitionists was a breeding ground for American feminism. Interestingly, the title "*Declaration of Sentiments*" had also served as the title of the 1833 founding manifesto of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which again demonstrates the way in which the *Declaration* set out to reappropriate history in order to further the political cause of women.

Other groups that were also advocating for abolitionism became avid supporters of women's rights. First and foremost, it was the religious minority of liberal Quakers that fueled abolitionism as well as the burgeoning women's movement. Aside from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, all the organizers of the Seneca Falls Convention were Quakers. In fact, it was a Quaker meeting close to Seneca Falls that had inspired Lucretia Mott to travel to upstate New York and reconvene with her long-time friend Stanton in order to plan the convention.[18]

It is worth noting that the coming together of these different progressive actors was no coincidence. In fact, the region of Seneca Falls provided fertile ground for the emerging women's movement. The Rochester area, in which the city was located, had been transformed into a bustling commercial region thanks to the building of the Erie Canal. Many people from the coastal cities of New York and Boston were drawn to this region that was to become a home for reformers. One of them was Elizabeth Cady Stanton, accompanying her husband, who was running as a candidate for the newly founded Free Soil Party. Another was Frederick Douglass, who, at the beginning of 1848, had set himself up in Rochester and started to publish *The North Star*.[19] At Stanton's request, this influential intellectual had attended the meeting and, thanks to an impassioned speech, had pushed through the resolution for universal suffrage that was deemed too radical by some attendees.

These findings demonstrate that intersectionality was an important factor in the development of feminism from the early stages on. At a time when women's positions in virtually all aspects of social life were subordinated to men,

17 *Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers: Miscellany, 1840-1946; Scrapbooks; #1, 2 of 4*, mss41210, box 9, prepared by Susan B. Anthony, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/mss412100154; and *Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers: Miscellany, 1840-1946; Scrapbooks; On the Woman's Rights Convention [1848]*, mss41210, box 9, prepared by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/mss412100152.

18 On the background of the draftees and the meeting: Judith Wellman: *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press (2004), pp. 183–208.

19 Waldo E. Martin: *The Mind of Frederick Douglass*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (1984), p. 15.

accounts of other subordinated social groups standing up against these injustices provided opportunities for women to criticize their own oppression as unjust. Unfortunately, this insight receded in at least some parts of the U.S. movement, as it increasingly began to focus on white middle-class women.[20]

Intersectionality, albeit of a different order, was also at the center of Louise Otto-Peters' *Address*. Whereas in the United States, racial conflicts and abolitionism served as stepping stones for the movement, in Germany it was class relations and the labor movement that played a similar role.[21]

Since workers – many of them women – had revolted in the textile mills of Silesia in 1844, the years leading up to the unsuccessful revolution of 1848 in the German lands had seen intense debates pertaining to the "social question." Living in Meissen, in the heart of the rapidly industrializing regions on the border between Saxony and Silesia, Otto-Peters had been part of these discussions. Many of her writings, such as the 1846 novel *Castle and Factory*, commented on the untenable working conditions of textile workers in Silesia and Saxony. Once her 1847 poems had catapulted her into the limelight, the *Address* constituted what was the apex of the writer's politico-intellectual interventions until that point.

At the end of the document, the author demonstrated that she was well aware of the connection between pressure and the press when she wrote that the press would be the only means by which she would be able to have an "effect on the common" ["*Wirkung für das Allgemeine*," D.B.]. Many newspapers in Saxony fulfilled Otto-Peters' wish that the pamphlet be reprinted for the sake of the "good cause." Underscoring the connection to labor, the writer had also approached her local newspaper, the *Meissener Wochenblatt* ["Meissen Weekly"], the *Saechsische Vaterlandsblätter*, founded by revolutionary Robert Blum, and the Leipzig-based *Arbeiter-Zeitung* ["Worker's Newspaper"], the very first labor newspaper in the German lands, in a bid to have her pamphlet published. Well received among women, who were approaching Otto-Peters on the street, it might be said that the attempt to target them with the *Address* was successful. The author was also was invited to meet with the minister she had addressed.[22]

The *Address*, however, did not provoke a debate comparable to that caused by the *Declaration*. The German publications were of use in that they infiltrated the public and dispersed the message. At the same time, all of these newspaper publishers were based either in Saxony or in Leipzig. This is illustrative of the differences in the German and American cases and their respective public spheres with regard to size and shape as well as political customs.

20 Estelle B. Freedman: *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, New York: Ballantine Books (2003), pp. 78–79.

21 Myra Marx Ferree: *Feminismen: Die deutsche Frauenbewegung in globaler Perspektive*, Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung (2019), p. 50.

22 Beyond these three newspapers, the *Address* was republished in at least three others: the *Leipziger Zeitung* (28 May 1848), *Der Volksfreund* in the Saxon city of Rochlitz (7 June 1848), and the journal *Freikugeln* (30 May 1848), which was based in Leipzig. I retrieved the information on the publication history of the document from Constanze Mudra at the Louise Otto-Peters Gesellschaft in Leipzig (via email, 28 August and 1 September 2022). For Otto-Peters' own account see: Louise Otto-Peters: "Selbsterlebtes: Skizzen aus Haus und Welt [1880-1890]", in: *Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv*, Digitalisat 7, https://www.digitales-deutsches-frauenarchiv.de, pp. 26–30.

Whereas on the North American continent thirty states had by then merged into a single nation, the German revolution of 1848 marked an attempt to bring such a state into existence. Whereas Stanton and her collaborators were able to address women across the entire nation, Otto-Peters' appeals were restricted to the much smaller confines of the Kingdom of Saxony. Her appeal to the Minister of the Interior and to the masses of workers in Saxony went as far as it was possible to get. Limited to these addressees, the public that was able to form by virtue of the pamphlet was decisively smaller than the actual audience convened by the *Declaration*.

Moreover, suspiciously omitted from the *Address* was the central feature that the *Declaration* had become famous for: the call to give the vote to women. For German women at that time, however, this demand was barely within the realm of possibility. In spite of declaring their intention of introducing democratic procedures at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the German states never did so. Even though demanding the vote was central to the German revolution of 1848, it took until the 1890s for the German women's movement to demand universal suffrage. Louise Otto-Peters was no exception to this rule. Further, the emphasis laid by the *Address* on a modicum of material security for women can be seen as an attempt to attain social participation through financial gains rather than any formal principle of equal political rights. The pamphlet actually expressed a desire for economic independence – a core value of the bourgeoisie.

With regard to the scope of the readership, it is worth mentioning one crucial aspect of pamphleteering. Revolutions in general, and indeed the American Revolution in particular, can be considered golden periods of pamphleteering that result in floods of "counterpublic literature."[23] Thus, while pamphleteering in the United States had become a cornerstone of democracy and civil society, comparable literary-activist phenomena were scarcely to be found in Germany.

Ultimately, the *Address* was part of the short-lived revolutionary period between the 1848 revolution and the restoration of the German Confederation in 1849. It was only at that time, when the bourgeoisie was vehemently pressing for political change, which also encompassed the freedom of the press, that a considerable number of pamphlets vying for social change emerged in the German states. Only then was it possible for female writers to openly break into the public sphere.

Even during this time, women were subject to censorship laws within the German states. Different women's newspapers founded by activists such as Louise Aston, Mathilda Franziska Anneke, and Louise Dittmar were shut down after printing only a few issues. Louise Otto-Peters' own paper, the *Frauen-Zeitung* [*Women's Newspaper*], established in 1849 and published in Leipzig, was the longest-running of them all, although remaining in print for just three years. In 1853, however, the state of Saxony issued a law that prohibited women from

23 Michael Warner: *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1990), p. 26.

serving as editors – this targeted Otto-Peters specifically, as she was the only woman to work in this capacity.[24]

VOICE

The similarities and many differences between the *Declaration of Sentiments* and the *Address of a Girl* underline the connection between pressure and the press. However, they also make it clear that social orders can only be subjected to pressure when the public sphere allows arguments to be evoked freely, as those who recognize their social marginalization need to be summoned and brought together. Only then can counterpublics form and exert pressure on societal structures.

Pamphlets and their impact on the public can be used as keys to unlock and contextualize historical conflicts and help us broaden our understanding of the material conditions for contentious politics. Whereas the *Declaration* was able to mobilize a counterpublic almost immediately and proved to be key in igniting a feminist movement, the formation of a feminist counterpublic by means of the *Address* in Germany proved to be far more difficult.

The reasons for these differences lie in their widely diverging political environments and traditions. The United States had been a democracy for over seventy years and pamphleteering was deeply interwoven with the civic traditions of the country. Germany, by contrast, was an authoritarian amalgamation of smaller states under absolutist rule. While the timing of the publication of both pamphlets in 1848 points toward the connection between pamphleteering and revolutionary times, the fact that Louise Otto-Peters drafted her letter during the revolutionary interregnum points to the idea that some political liberties and lifted restrictions need to be in place in order to successfully "pamphleteer." And so the history of both pamphlets demonstrates the threat that a free public sphere posed for authoritarian states and underlines just how crucial the free circulation of ideas was for pressing social orders.

Aside from these differences, both cases suggest that the counterpublics mobilized by the pamphlets, or those intended to be mobilized, revealed a considerable overlap with already existing counterpublics. Whereas in the United States the abolitionist movement provided a framework through which to transmit feminist demands, in Germany the early labor movement played a comparable role. At its very inception, therefore, the women's movement was displaying considerable intersectionality with other oppressed groups – a fact that should be remembered in times of intensely fought and divisive cultural wars.

The material fabric of the societies and political structures was imprinted on the pamphlets. This also extends to the style of the pamphlets. The degree of polemicity in the case of the American *Declaration* was higher than the timid appeal to authority of the *Address*. It is tempting to interpret these differences as an

24 Ute Gerhard: *Frauenbewegung und Feminismus: Eine Geschichte seit 1789*, Munich: C.H. Beck (2020), p. 35, 43.

expression of what we perceive to be a distinctly American brand of trust in freedom and a comparatively high democratic self-consciousness. Read in this light, the exaggerated reaction of the state of Saxony to Otto-Peters' demands proved that the reticence she exhibited in her open letter was not unfounded.

With regard to the creation of knowledge in feminist counterpublics, both pamphlets present us with clear analyses of male domination. They demonstrate that an understanding of gendered power structures prefigured notions of patriarchy that became commonplace with the feminist "second wave" of the 1970s. However, the manifold delineations between different stages in the development of feminism point toward the need for contextualization when it comes to specific historical conflicts. Pamphlets can be used as tools that do just that. By defining pamphleteering as an activity that is principally defined by its function of applying pressure and not merely by a certain medial format, analyses can easily extend into the digital publics of today.

MATERIAL FOR AGITATION

DAPHNE WEBER





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Daphne Weber: "Material for Agitation", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 129–140.

When we think of pamphlets, we think of rapidly circulating short texts that tend to agitate huge masses of people. But who agitates the agitator? How is knowledge passed on and what enables political agitation structures to work self-sufficiently? How are slogans intended for high circulation developed, formed and passed on to the public sphere? What types of media and artifacts carry slogans, and by what other means do slogans materialize? I would like to explore these questions using examples of pamphlets and brochures published by the German Communist Party (KPD) from 1920 to 1930, and now held by the *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv* (SAPMO), known in English as the Foundation for the Archives of the Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the German Federal Archives.[1] The archive is so named because its collections were assembled and organized in the GDR but also contain a large number of artifacts produced by the KPD in the Weimar Republic.[2]

Having designed what follows as a close reading material presentation, I will focus on the production and style of slogans and political positions that appeared in everyday literature addressed to the agitprop cadre, whose task it was to agitate the masses in their districts, factories and enterprises through mass demonstrations or educational trainings. First, I will show what the agitprop cadre's practices aimed to do and how the KPD constructed specific slogans and targeted them toward specific groups. The focus, subsequently, will be placed on the circulation and everyday use of slogans within three contexts: party press, public locations, and group recitation or "choral speaking" settings.

Finally, I will consider the military implications of the daily routines and fomenting practices connected to the slogan as a form. Slogans are originally tools of military practice: translated from the Gaelic word of origin, slogan means "battle cry."[3] In German the military connection is even more obvious: "Parole," the word for slogan, also denotes a military password or word of honor.[4]

STRUCTURES

Who were the principal agents involved in developing and spreading political slogans in the German communist workers' movement of the 1920s? Mass mobilization and organization were central aims of all communist organizations and were primarily carried out by agitprop departments. My first example, a small pocket-sized-pamphlet titled *Praktische Winke für die Arbeit der Agitprop-Funktionäre in den Wahlkämpfen 1928* ("Practical hints for the work of agitprop functionaries in the 1928 election campaign"), lists the concrete tasks of the KPD agitprop department. According to this document, frequent meetings of the

1 The translations of the German archival material presented are my own.

2 See *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO)*, Berlin, https://www.bundesarchiv.de (→ SAPMO).

3 "Slogan", in: *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, https://www.dwds.de/wb/Slogan.

4 See "Parole", in: *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, vol. VII, Leipzig: Hirzel (1889).

agitprop department should be held on "*how to work through all the members of the party to popularize the party's politics amongst the masses*", "*educational work within the party...*", "*mass agitation*", *"agitation at workplace/plants*"*,* "*workers' correspondent movement*"*,* "*work within sympathizing and other mass organisations*"*,* and "*distribution of literature*".[5] This illustrates the fact that agitprop practices contained different tasks, including personal dialogue and education as well as a wide distribution of political positions within the populace and factories via newspapers and political literature. Alliance work, meanwhile, enabled group members to strengthen connections with other organizations and gain new comrades from other contexts. The KPD itself built up a remarkable network of party-affiliated and mass organizations, from sports, theater and photography groups to singing clubs.[6] In addition to illuminating the ideological theoretical discussions surrounding the cultural policy of the KPD, workers' literature and the mass novel, Gerhard Friedrich traces the history of literary institutions in the KPD's environment, such as the Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller (League of Proletarian-Revolutionary Writers).[7] It was not uncommon for these subordinate organizations to provide an entry point into communist politics or associate more apolitical people with the KPD as an organization in order to keep them in the sphere of influence and win them over as voters.

The core strategy of the agitation process was the creation and use of slogans. Brochures addressing agitprop functionaries and political cadres not only explained how to structure the political organization and practices of agitation, but also how the textual work was to be done: that is, how to articulate positions and derive slogans from them. The brochure *Richtlinien für die Wahlkämpfe 1928* suggests that effective agitprop texts must combine a current up-to-date slogan that speaks directly to the worker with the articulation of an ultimate goal. Short-term and long-term objectives are intertwined:

> Only through this conjunction of the current demands with the transitional demands and the ultimate goals can we make concrete propaganda to bring about our main goal: *Against the bourgeois coalition for the fighting block of workers in urban and rural areas, for the workers' and peasants' government!*[8]

5 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke für die Arbeit der Agitpropfunktionäre in den Wahlkämpfen 1928*, Berlin (1928) (= *Für die Wahlarbeit! Material* 3), p. 5. Highlighting as in the original.

6 See Ludwig Hoffmann, Daniel Hoffmann-Ostwald: *Deutsches Arbeitertheater 1918–1933*, Berlin: Henschelverl. Kunst und Gesellschaft (1972). This two-volume work tells the history of proletarian theater in the Weimar Republic through the lens of individual plays and songs by agitprop groups or performative phenomena such as the mass performances and choruses of the trade unions in Leipzig from 1920 to 1924.

7 See Gerhard Friedrich: *Proletarische Literatur und politische Organisation: Die Literaturpolitik der KPD in der Weimarer Republik und die proletarisch-revolutionäre Literatur*, Frankfurt am Main: Lang (1981); and Almuth Püschel: "Die Arbeit der KPD mit dem Film und mit Filmkünstlern während der Weimarer Republik", in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 27/4 (1985), pp. 510–517. Püschel's text was written in the GDR and features corresponding socialist rhetoric and terminology, somehow emulating the SPD and working-class movement tradition.

8 Central Committee of the KPD: *Richtlinien für die Wahlkämpfe 1928*, Berlin (1928), p. 13. Highlighting as in the original.

The text calls for a system change before listing current demands, which include an eight-hour day, a 45-hour week, a wage increase, and healthy homes for every working-class family. In a sign of the First World War's still-vivid presence in collective memory, the authors also demand the end of legal and illegal armament.[9]

This material shows that the KPD's mass agitation was rooted in addressing the mundane and specific problems of the masses of wage earners. Yet the texts the KPD produced for mass audiences also contain slogans that use daily socioeconomic conditions to link them with the ultimate goals and positions of the KPD. In other words, the KPD embedded its political positions in short texts that suggested solutions for common problems people faced on a daily basis. These texts were kept as short as possible, reflecting the KPD's attempts to reach busy audiences whose life was governed by the rhythms of a wage-earning job. This was also apparent in the organizational structure of the KPD, which was basally developed around cells that covered different streets and similarly sought to address people in their everyday environment.[10]

DISTINCTION AND RECODING

I would like to turn now to the construction of slogans themselves by focusing on a characteristic form I call *distinction and recoding. Distinction* denotes positional assumptions through demarcation and opposition, *recoding* signifies the reinterpretation of attributions in other rhetorical patterns of interpretation.[11] This form appears across agitprop literature, including in a brochure from 1930, which constitutes the first publication from the series *Instruktionen für die Wahlarbeit* (Instruction for election campaigning).

> The slogan Against the Young-Plan, mass misery and fascism, for a free, socialist Germany!' connects our fight against German capitalism with the fight against the international financial capital and world imperialism and is expressed clearly. [...] We must oppose the bourgeois umbrella slogan Against Marxism! with the slogan against social democratic treason against Marxism! Against the anti-Marxist front of servants of capital! For revolutionary Marxism! For unforgiving class war, power to the working class, for communism![12]

9 See Central Committee of the KPD: *Richtlinien für die Wahlkämpfe 1928* (1928), pp. 13–14.

10 See Heinrich August Winkler: *Der Schein der Normalität: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik 1924 bis 1930*, Berlin/Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz (1985), p. 451.

11 The positive appropriation of insults can also be seen as a subversive practice, see Christian Vasili Schütze: *Die Subversion verletzender Worte: Grundlagen einer Politik des Performativen*, Frankfurt/New York: Campus (2022), p. 21. David Bebnowski describes the recoding of certain central concepts of the labor movement and their appropriation by the National Socialists, referring to Stuart Hall, see David Bebnowski: "Die Umkodierung des Proletariats: Druckerzeugnisse im Kampf der NSDAP um die Arbeiterschaft", in: *Kleinformate im Umbruch: Mobile Medien für Widerstand und Kooperation (1918–1933)*, ed. by Caroline Adler, Maddalena Casarini, Daphne Weber, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter (2023), pp. 37–58.

12 Central Committee of the KPD: *Gegen Young-Plan, Massenelend und Faschismus: Für ein*



1 Guidelines for the 1930 election campaign, edited by the Central Committee of the KPD. The title denotes "Against the Young Plan, mass misery and fascism: For a free, socialist Germany."

This structure, as we see, is regular and redundant. It suggests that a successful KPD slogan is made up of two parts. The first component of a slogan marks a distinction or reappropriates established terms (e.g., "Against the Young-Plan" or "Against social democratic treason against Marxism"). The second part articulates the political position ("For unforgiving class war"). The first part can also be

freies, sozialistisches Deutschland (Richtlinien für den Wahlkampf 1930), Berlin (1930) (= *Instruktionen für die Wahlarbeit* 1), p. 7.

implicitly contained in the second one. As this example demonstrates, slogans are unifying stances: by demarcating positions they are for and against, slogans standardize and concentrate political views in concise phrases. The short length of slogans is therefore not only a practical aid to circulation, but also a feature that helps this form consolidate thought. At the same time, we can observe that the KPD tailored every position text or slogan to a specific target group. This is evident in the brochure *Sonderanweisungen für die Wahlkämpfe 1928* ("Special instructions for the election campaigns 1928"). In addition to passages that give recommendations for specifically addressing women, there are also those aimed at young people or rural populations. Addressing women, the brochure states: "In the foreground we put our female workers' demands – Equal pay for equal work, protection of women workers, etc."[13] Only then do the general sociopolitical demands follow, led by the demand for protection of mothers and children. Well before digital tools made targeted advertising commonplace, the 1920's KPD agitprop cadre was highly specialized in applying marketing techniques tailored to target groups.

What can we conclude? The materials I have examined emphasize that the political slogan cannot be random, since it then misses its aim of mass agitation. First, slogans are up-to-date political messages; second, they target specific social groups. It is necessary to differentiate between short sentences and slogans. Short phrasings can be slogans, but short phrasings don't have to be slogans. Positions and demands supply slogans with specific content. The slogan is a mere rhetorical form that can be adapted to a topic such as housing, wages, or rights. The difference between a pamphlet and a slogan, indeed between a leaflet and a slogan, is quite simply the amount of text. Pamphlets and flyers, however, can consist of slogans or contain slogans.[14]

CIRCULATION

Having looked at the theory governing the construction of slogans as texts, we are now going to examine how the circulation and material form of slogans affected their function and audience. How do mediums and artifacts materialize and format slogans? What broadened a slogan's range of recipients and how did slogans come into general use beyond the cadre? I offer three examples, starting with the party press.

13 Central Committee of the KPD: *Sonderanweisungen für die Wahlkämpfe 1928*, Berlin (1928) (= *Für die Wahlarbeit! Material* 2), p. 19. Original German: "In den Vordergrund stellen wir unsere Arbeiterinnenforderungen – Gleicher Lohn für gleiche Arbeit, Arbeiterinnenschutz usw."

14 See Gillian Whiteley: "The Allure of Pamphilos: The Radical Art of Pamphleteering", in: *Art, Politics, and The Pamphleteer*, ed. by Jane Tormey, Gillian Whiteley, London: Bloomsbury Academic (2021), pp. 5–28, p. 10. Whiteley reflects on pamphlets and states that a simple slogan like "Down with Mussolini" does not make a pamphlet.



ist, wenn sie in der Hand die Waffe, im Kopf und Herz den Gedanken des Kommunismus hat. Am 1. Mai mögen die deutschen Arbeiter sich sammeln unter den Losungen:

Keine Teilung der Macht mit der Bourgeoisie!
Keine Waffen in der Hand der Bourgeoisie!
Keine Parlamente, sondern Arbeiterräte!
Und alle Macht den Arbeiterräten!

Werden sollen die deutschen Arbeiter am 1. Mai die internationale Verbrüderung in Festen und Reden feiern. Diese Internationalität der Feste und Reden ist zerbrochen, die zweite Internationale wurde zur willfährigen Dienerin des Imperialismus und zur Kuppelerin der Gegenrevolution, sie ist in Schmach und Schande untergegangen.

Heute zählt nur noch die Tat, die für die Internationale und die Weltrevolution in die Wagschale geworfen wird. Heute zählt nur noch die Internationale der Tat, deren Vorkämpfer Räte-Rußland ist.

Räte-Rußland hat alle seine militärischen Feinde, die das Weltkapital nacheinander gegen es aufgeboten hat, mit stählerner Faust niedergeworfen. Aber das Weltkapital hat darum den Kampf nicht aufgegeben, es verlegt ihn nur auf ein anderes Gebiet. Der Sieg, den Kulver und Blei und Hunger nicht erfochten haben, den sollen die Warenballen und die Wirtschaftsvertrage Englands und Amerikas mit Sowjet-Rußland erfechten. Das englisch-amerikanische Kapital hofft, Räte-Rußland ebenso finanziell und wirtschaftlich und damit auch politisch zu unterjochen, wie etwa Mexiko oder Persien oder irgend ein anderer „antipolitischer" Staat durch friedliche imperialistische Durchdringung unterjocht worden sind.

Die Arbeiter der Westländer und Mitteleuropas haben demgegenüber die revolutionäre Aufgabe, die Kapitalmacht in den eigenen Ländern zu brechen. Nur so kann Rußland geschützt, aber auch nur so kann der Neuaufbau der europäischen Wirtschaft gesichert werden.

Mit dem neuen revolutionären Anstieg, den der 13. März Deutschland gab, rückt aber auch die deutsche Revolution selbst in den Brennpunkt der internationalen Aufgaben der Weltrevolution.

Es gilt für die Arbeiterklasse der Westländer, mit den Anstrengungen der deutschen Arbeiterklasse gegen die Gegenrevolution im Innern ihre eigenen Anstrengungen zu vereinigen, damit die Anschläge und Zettelungen des englischen, französischen und amerikanischen Imperialismus gegen die deutsche Revolution vereitelt werden. Mögen die Arbeiterklassen aller Länder sich vereinigen in den Rufen: die am 1. Mai die deutschen Proletarier erhoben:

Hände weg von Räte-Rußland!
Hände weg von der deutschen Revolution!
Ewgste politische und wirtschaftliche Verbindung mit Räte-Rußland!
Es lebe die dritte Internationale!
Es lebe die Weltrevolution!

Politische Uebersicht.

Das Ruhrrevier.

Die Nationalversammlungsdebatte über die Einwohnerwehren, die Bewaffnung der Bourgeoisie, eilt über in eine Debatte über die Bewaffnung der Arbeiterschaft den Popanz der Bourgeoisie, und wurde zu einer Generaldebatte über das Ruhrrevier. Denn dort sind die Gegensätze am schärfsten zusammengeballt, dort ist die Arbeiterschaft am machtvollsten aufgetreten, dort hat sie sich selbst bewaffnet und hat im Ruhrrevier bei sich die konterrevolutionäre Soldateska auf Arbeiterleichen neue Machtpositionen erobert. Im Ruhrrevier hat sich der neue Kurskurs der Regierung am besten offenbart. So wurde die Debatte zu einer Debatte über die Gesamtpolitik der Regierung.

Severing, der die undankbare Aufgabe hatte, diese Politik zu vertheidigen, wurde gleich von Anfang von seinem Parteigenossen Steinbrink Lügen gestraft. Steinbrink stellte fest, daß die Reichswehr es war, die das Bielefelder Abkommen gebrochen hat. Severing wagte es, eine halbe Stunde später die alte Lüge von der Beschießung Wesels aufzuwärmen. Dann erzählte er die Märchen von den Plünderbanden.

Es steht fest, daß es im Westen des Reichs eine Provokateure gab, die im Dienste Watters Putsche provozieren wollten, und noch jetzt provozieren wollen. Die Arbeiterschaft hat sich von diesen Leuten nicht einfangen lassen. Die dunklen Elemente sind noch immer an der Arbeit. Die Reichswehr hat noch nicht genug an den unzähligen Erschießungen und Verhaftungen. Man will weiter marschieren. Darum wird fieberhaft daran gearbeitet, damit es schließlich der Ruhr zu Putschen kommt. Die Putsche wollen sie benutzen, so schwächt man die gewaltige Arbeiterklasse, unterstützt von der rheinisch-westfälischen Bourgeoisie und den Stadtverordnetenlingen, in denen diese Bourgeoisie dominiert. Das rheinische Bürgertum hat mit dem richtigen Bourgeoisinstinkt nur der Entwaffneten Arbeiterschaft kein Vertrauen, wenn es auch diese Arbeiterschaft nur, wie die Monarchisten sich in ihrer Sammelwut ausdrücken, als „Bodensatz" betrachtet. Sie kann die revolutionäre Energie dieser Arbeiterschaft nicht ausleben und sich den [illegible] zu eigen machen.

Severing hat dem sogenannten Hilfe'un des rheinischen Bürgertums Gehör geschenkt und den Vormarsch südlich der Ruhr angeordnet. Da, Severing tut alles, was seine Generale wollen. Er hat Watter losgelassen, weil die Generale es so wollten. Der Wille der Generale ist Severings Himmelreich. Was die Generale wollen, das will auch Severing, auch wenn die Generale Putschisten waren. Er erklärt selbst:

„Die Soldaten waren nicht alle Verschwörer, sie waren sämtlich auf Befehl der Regierung eingetreten, auch wenn ihre Führer Putschisten waren".

Darum sind die Soldaten straffrei, wenn sie auch den Kapp-Lüttwitz nachgelaufen sind, wenn sie sich auch die schlimmsten Ausschreitungen haben zuschulden kommen lassen.

Bei Arbeitern ist es eine andere Sache. Da muß in jedem einzelnen Falle festgestellt werden, daß sie für die Regierung gekämpft haben. Daß sie ein Recht des Biefelder Abkommens. Das bedeutet freie Hand dem weißen Schrecken. Und der kann ja auch im Ruhrrevier.

Wie sich logisch aus dieser Politik der Regierung ergibt, worüber auch die Zu'gen betreffend die Bildung von Ortswehren auf Arbeitern nicht eingehalten. Die Ortswehren, erklärt man, sind der Entente nicht annehmen. Man hätte ja auch darum die Einwohnerwehren abschaffen müssen. Die Sicherheitspolizei könne auch nicht blos aus Arbeitern bestehen. Was man damit meint, wird deutlich durch den Bericht der parlamentarischen Kommission, die das Ruhrrevier bereiste und die die Errichtung einer starken Sicherheitspolizei forderte. Die Entente erlaubt es nicht, daß die Reichswehr im Ruhrrevier auf die Dauer bleibt und so will man als Ersatz eine Sicherheitspolizei, der man durch Einstellung von ein paar politisch rückständigen Arbeitern einen freundlichen Anstrich geben will. Das bedeutet die völlige Vernichtung der Errungenschaften, die sich die Ruhrarbeiter im Kampf gegen die Kappisten erobert haben: die Kontrollorgane und die Ruhrräte sind in den konterrevolutionäre Soldateska.

Die Arbeiterschaft im Ruhrrevier ist niedergeschlagen. Man will das Werk vollenden, indem man auch die Arbeiterschaft im Wuppertal niederschlägt. Die Soldateska feiert Triumphe. Die Konterrevolution schickt sich an, die Arbeiterschaft neue Ketten.

Die Leichen der zweifach'n Proletarier im Ruhrrevier sind eine stumme Anklage an das deutsche Proletariat und an die Führer, die verlogt haben, als es galt, zu handeln, um das Ruhrrevier vor den Banden Watters zu retten. Die Unabhängigen und die Gewerkschaftsführer haben mit ihren Kommissionen und ihrem Streik aufreizen, an die Allmacht der Verhandlungen glaubten. Das Proletariat ist ihnen gefolgt. Jetzt sieht man die Früchte. Sie seien eine Lehre für später.

Die Kapitulation vor dem Nationalismus.

Es ist noch nicht lange her, da stritt die Berliner Opposition, die jetzige K. A. A. P. D., jedes Verhältnis zum Nationalbolschewismus Wolffheim-Laufenbergscher Observanz ab. Und Wolffheim selbst wurde von der kommunistischen Organisation Hamburgs zwar als „ehrlicher Revolutionär" anerkannt, aber sein Nationalbolschewismus, wie er in der sogenannten ersten Kommunistischen Arbeit Wolffheim-Laufenberg zum Ausdruck kam, wurde als persönliche Angelegenheit dieser beiden bezeichnet und damit zu den Akten gelegt.

Wir sagten schon damals voraus, daß in günstiger Situation dieser Nationalbolschewismus seine Partei finden werde und dann auch der Nationalbolschewismus nur mehr noch der Nationalismus übrig bleiben wird. Die „günstige Situation" ist da, die Kappaffäre breitet ihre Arme aus und umfaßt alles. Und die Partei ist da, die K. A. P. D., und sie hat sich in aller Form den Wolffheim-Laufenberg und ihrem nationalen Bolschewismus ergeben.

Die beiden erlassen ihre zweite Kommunistische Adresse in Gestalt eines Manifestes. Um die arbeitenden Massen auf ihre Seite zu bekommen, erlassen sie „Im Auftrage des Zentralausschusses der Kommunistischen Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands".

Diese zweite Kommunistische Adresse in Gestalt des Manifestes ist theoretisch vielleicht phantastische Kannegießerei, wie die erste. Politisch ist sie die Kapitulation vor dem Nationalismus, das K. A. P. D. mit den Kappisten taugt.

Das Thema des Aufrufes ist der zweite imperialistische Krieg, der Krieg um die Herrschaft über den Stillen Ozean, für den Wolffheim-Laufenberg den Massen zu verteilen, daß England-Amerika auf der einen, Japan Frankreich auf der anderen Seite zu stehen haben werden.

Ueber diese Kannegießerei lohnt es sich nicht, ein Wort zu verlieren. Dagegen sei festgestellt und festgehalten, daß die Wolffheim-Laufenberg wiederum die grundsätzliche Einstellung auf einen kommenden revolutionären Krieg proklamieren. Und zwar einen Angriffskrieg. Denn wenn im Kriege gegen die Weltherrschaftsplänen erklärt wird, „sicher Sowjetrußland, für den Völkerfrieden zu kämpfen", dann erklären sie in Wahrheit dafür, daß nicht ein revolutionärer Krieg die Bahn für den Weltkrieg eröffnet, dann ist der Schwert eröffnet," so ergibt sich daraus klar, daß der Gedanke des revolutionären Angriffskrieges von den Wolffheim-Laufenberg festgehalten und von der K. A. P. übernommen wird, nur, daß dieser Gedanke jetzt vorsichtsgemäße von zweifachen den Zeiten sei.

Der Aufruf spricht davon, daß die Militär- und Polizeiorganisationen so einzelne sei, als daß sie auf Verbrechertum zurückzuführen sei, es bleibe nur übrig, sie der gemeinsamen Dummheit ihrer Urheber zuzuschreiben.

Wie sind der Auffassung, daß, wer in diesem Augenblick den revolutionären Angriffskrieg zum Angelpunkt seiner Politik macht, Dummheit und Verbrechen harmonisch verbindet.

Dummheit: denn die, die dieser Politik das Wort reden, sind dabei nur die Opfer des jämmerlichen Nationalismus. Ihre geistigen Piraten verhüllen nur schlecht die wohlbekannte Absichtenlosen Kadettenweisheit eines Südendorff und Oberst Bauer.

Verbrechen: denn wenn irgend etwas der nationalistischen Verhetzung der Volksmassen durch die kapitalistischen Regierungen des Auslandes in die Hände arbeitet, so ist es diese stupide und verbrecherische politische Einstellung.

Für den einfachen Arbeiter muß heute klar sein, daß, wenn die Revolution Krieg führen will, sie ihn nur gezwungen und zu ihrer Verteidigung führen will und daß nur dieser Charakter des Krieges, wenn es je unvermeidlich sein sollte, den proletarischen Staat, der ihn führen muß, die Sympathie der Proletarier der Länder sichern wird, die ihn für ihre Regierung anzufechten gezwungen sein werden.

Jedermann sieht z. B., daß die politische Stärke Sowjet-Rußlands in seinem Abwehrkampf gegen das Weltkapital in erster Linie daher rührt, daß alle europäischen Arbeiter klar wußten, daß es ein Abwehrkampf war.

Mit dem Gedanken des revolutionären Angriffskrieges, um den Kommunismus mit dem Schwert zu propagieren, mit diesem Gedanken sind sie jetzt nur die antibolschewistische Liga und die bürgerliche Lügenpresse zufrieden gegangen.

Der Makulatur scheut sich nicht, die Kommunistische Internationale für sich in Anspruch zu nehmen. Wir zweifeln nicht, daß die Kommunistische Internationale diese Arbeit für die Südendorffs und Lüttwitze aller Länder als mit ihrem Wesen und mit ihrer Politik unvereinbar ablehnen wird.

Helmhake.

Wie Rosa Luxemburgs Soldatenmißhandlungsprozeß am Anfang des Weltkrieges steht, so steht der Prozeß gegen den Oberleutnant Hiller an seinem Ende. Wie Rosa Luxemburgs Prozeß hineinsehen ließ in eine abgrundtiefe See des Leidens, in ein unendlich gleichförmiges Meer des Grauens, so zeigt der Prozeß gegen Hiller die Brutalität auf die Spitze getrieben. Das ist nicht die Soldateska, das ist nicht der Krieg, die Schuld haben an diesen Schauderlichkeiten. So feig-brutal wie die Soldateska, so grausam jeder Krieg ist: es ist der preußische Militarismus, der zum politischen System erhobene Unteroffizierstiefel, der Entartung alles Menschentums zur Vollendung gebracht, zur Regierungsmethode erhoben hat. Der letzten Hemmungen ledig, die vor 1914 seiner vollen Entfaltung noch im Wege standen, hat der Krieg den preußischen Militarismus, indem er ihn auf den Gipfel seiner Macht erhob, auch hineingeführt in die abgründige Tiefe der Gemeinheit und Schmach.

Erschütternd und empörend, beschämend und aufreizend zugleich ist es, was der Prozeß Hiller vor aller Welt enthüllt. Der Soldat Helmhake, der im schmutzigen Erdloch bei zehn Grad Kälte, ohne Pflege in Krankheit, ohne Wasser im Fieber, ohne Essen im Hunger hilflos krepiert: ein Einzelner nur ist er von Hunderttausenden, die gleich Unerhörtes litten. Nur ein Beispiel ist es unter Millionen, was ein Zeuge über die teuflisch erfonnenen Quälereien sagt, die Hiller dem Helmhake antat, und die alle anderen Zeugen unterstrichen:

Ich fand einen Vorwittags vor meinem Unterstand. Helmhake war etwa 10 bis 12 Meter entfernt an einem Baum gebunden. Da kam der Angeklagte Hiller auf ihn zu, brach mit ihm und schlug ihn dann ins Gesicht. Später band ich dann als Posten vor dem Erschlag. In der Nacht hörte ich Helmhake furchtbar stöhnen und als ich hineintrat, sah ich, daß er im Fieber lag. Ich hielt ihm dann einen Schneeball an den Mund. Das Erstaunen war für Mannschaften nicht verwendbar. Es war für schwache Unteroffiziere und Wachtschaften bestimmt. Als Helmhake, der nicht stehen konnte, dann am nächsten Tag von zwei Mann zur Latrine geschleift wurde, kam der Angeklagte dazu und sagte: „Ihr dem Aas noch nicht krepiert? Trampelt ihn doch in den Dreck, dem Miststück." Er hat ihn dann selbst ins Gesicht getreten. Am nächsten Tag hörte ich dann, daß Helmhake, der inzwischen noch in einen anderen Unterstand gebracht war, gestorben sei. Der Posten vor dem Arrestlokal hatte von dem Gruppenführer den Befehl, dem Helmhake kein Essen zu geben. Ich nehme an, daß dieser Befehl vom Kompagnieführer stammte.

Und der Oberleutnant Hiller, der Angeklagte, der stets besoffene Soldatenschinder, der Mörder Helmhakes, der die Soldaten um Lebensmittel bestehlen hat, der sie zwingt, in der Sommerhitze das mühsam geholte Wasser wieder auszuschütten, auch er ist nur ein Typus der Herrenkaste, der sich für das erwählt hält, das deutsche arbeitende Volk zu knechten.

2 A section of the *Rote Fahne*, the KPD's newspaper, published on May 1, 1920. The *Rote Fahne* was sometimes published up to twice a day, but at other times issues were censored and didn't come out at all.

Die Rote Fahne (The Red Flag), the party paper of the KPD, was sometimes published up to twice a day, but at other times issues were censored and didn't come out at all.[15] On May 1, 1920, *Die Rote Fahne* announced the following:

15 See Manfred Brauneck: *Die Rote Fahne: Kritik, Theorie, Feuilleton 1918–1933*, München: Wilhelm Fink (1973), p. 19.

> On the 1st of May the German workers may gather under the slogans:
> *No to sharing power with the bourgeoisie*
> *No to weapons in the hands of the bourgeoisie!*
> *No to parliaments, workers' councils instead!*
> *All power to the workers' councils! [...]*
> *Hands off Soviet Russia!*
> *Hands off the German Revolution!*
> *Closest political and commercial relations with Soviet Russia!*
> *Long live the Third International!*
> *Long live the world revolution!*[16]

The parts printed in italicized type, originally printed in bold letters, are the slogans. One can see that the logic of this page is both rhetorical and visual. The syntax indicates that these short and snappy exclamations are commands rather than explanations or descriptive contributions to a debate. The bold type, meanwhile, implicitly instructed readers to memorize these passages. The exclamation marks not only stress that these slogans are the most important parts of the text but invite readers to imagine the slogans being shouted. Beyond that, a dichotomy of "for" and "against" comes into focus – once again communicated visually as well as textually. The points the party supports and the points it opposes face each other on the page. Here, the newspaper is turned into a means of organizing and agitating, as demonstrators can take the slogans from the front page as their mottos for the day of demonstration.

How did slogans and party politics materialize beyond the party press? The brochures that address agitprop cadres also included short handouts on how to popularize slogans and positions in the public sphere:

> [...] 06. Writing slogans on the wall.
>
> Another form of effective agitation at the workplace is writing certain slogans on the wall at busy spots within the plant using chalk and paint [...] It's suitable to purchase a set of letters made of rubber, so the particular slogans, messages and demands addressing the workforce can be compiled and inconspicuously stamped. [...] After work people carrying posters and banners have to stand in front of the plant. Here it is usually necessary to use comrades who aren't working in the same plant, because otherwise they will likely be subject to dismissal.[17]

Slogans that are placed in high-traffic locations and therefore seen by as many passers-by as possible have the highest likelihood of circulating widely and being picked up. In this context, the workplace is also a central agitation site since it is there that a particularly large number of workers can be reached as a target group. The caution and implicit repression to which communists were subjected in the

16 "Zum 1. Mai", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 1, 1920), pp. 1–2, p. 2.
17 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), p. 8.

Weimar Republic is at the same time evident from the quote. The advantage of banner carriers who stand in front of the factory gates at the end of the working day is that they can offer direct personal contact in the event of inquiries.

The instructions that working-class families received from the Central Committee via agitprop cadres reached deep into the private sphere and personal space. Windows become show windows, personal beliefs become advertisements for the party and its politics. Working-class families were instructed to hang banners from their windows or otherwise decorate their homes with flags during election campaigns.[18] The public and private spheres were transformed in their entirety into a living propaganda show to encourage as many people as possible to vote for the KPD. The masses of adherents became active campaigners who themselves went on to agitate with tremendous creativity. Election campaigns in the Weimar Republic were veritable paper battles in terms of the number of leaflets distributed, with the communists conducting their street campaigns most intensively.[19] Due to reduced financial means and various cultural and political exclusions, the communists were interested in mobile, agile and, above all, inexpensive agitation practices, which were particularly applicable during election campaigns.[20]

Sometimes the streets would be transformed into theaters, complete with people dressed up in costumes as stereotypical figures. In one instructive drawing, one first sees a Nazi, then Hindenburg with a spiked helmet, and then a bishop, followed by a worker in simple workers' clothes with a sign reading: "Worker, what did they do for you?"[21] The text surrounding the drawing gives more examples of how the stage might be filled. The same brochure also instructs the cadre on how to do linocuts for perfect results on posters, how to write letters the same size on banners, and additionally how to scale them.[22] A small picture book from 1924 communicates solely via photographs illustrating how to produce proper agitation and propaganda in the public sphere. From poster pasting and backyard agitation to mobile advertising columns, processions, and bicycle demonstrations, various forms of protest are explained pictorially. Even animals become carrier media for slogans, as in a cow with a sign around it that says: "I vote SPD." Every wall, every window, every moving body, and every cow is used as advertising space here, transforming private space into public space where the fight for hegemony can be fought. Slogans gain particular importance in this work to articulate basic stances. As short texts, they are easy to vary, to adapt to different media, and to circulate rapidly.

18 See Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), p. 11.

19 See Thomas Mergel: *Propaganda nach Hitler: Eine Kulturgeschichte des Wahlkampfs in der Bundesrepublik 1949–1990*, Göttingen: Wallstein (2010), p. 51.

20 See Dirk Lau: *Wahlkämpfe der Weimarer Republik: Propaganda und Programme der politischen Parteien bei den Wahlen zum Deutschen Reichstag von 1924 bis 1930*, Baden-Baden: Tectum (2018), p. 224.

21 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), p. 18. The original German reads: "Arbeiter, was haben euch diese gebracht?"

22 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), pp. 28–31.

The slogan's short length also affords its use as a chant: slogans create rhythms that regulate bodies and unite individuals into groups. This leads me to my third setting of circulation: choral speaking. A brochure giving practical tips and tricks for agitation work states:

> [...] 16. Choral speaking as means of agitation. [...] Short mass choral speaking is even more effective at demonstrations. Therefore, it is necessary to shout short slogans that are intelligible to all and easy to pronounce according to a marching beat. [...]
>
> Of course there are a lot of slogans that can be shouted like this while marching. But they always have to be short and easy. [...] Also at gatherings this can be practiced and it is an essential contribution to strengthen the collective will of an agglomerated crowd.[23]

Here, the acts of marching in step and speaking in time aim to organize, unify and standardize a group of people. Or as William McNeill puts it: "Moving our muscles rhythmically and giving voice consolidate group solidarity by altering human feelings."[24] Short, rhythmical slogans are suitable for agitational practice via media like banners, posters, street theater and mass choral speaking. Because choral speaking is bound to specific rhythms and marching beats, the practice is well-suited for standardizing political articulation. As McNeill writes, "muscular bonding" activates community formation.

The materiality of the slogan thus includes not only its diverse material formats (pamphlets, posters, etc.) but also its material consequences: slogans order practices and embodied performances. Moreover, the material forms of slogans script and regulate these embodied practices, revealing slogans as versatile and important political organizing tools.

MILITARIZATION

Tight organization implies a certain military rigor and discipline. On the one hand, creativity can be acted out in agitprop; on the other hand, the slogans have to follow the protocols of the party line. The military implications of organizing the cadre and the masses within the party increased from the middle of the 1920s. It is not by chance that this coincided with the tenure of Ernst Thälmann, who led the party and the Red Front Fighters' League, the paramilitary unit of the KPD, in personal union.[25] More generally, all kinds of different groups and pre-political

23 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), pp. 20–21.

24 William H. McNeill: *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1995), p. viii.

25 See Norman LaPorte: "The Rise of Ernst Thälmann and the Hamburg Left, 1921–1923", in: *Weimar Communism as Mass Movement 1918–1933*, ed. by Ralf Hoffrogge, Norman LaPorte, London: Lawrence and Wishart (2017), pp. 129–149; Klaus Kinner: *Der deutsche Kommunismus: Selbstverständnis und Realität*, vol. 1, Berlin: Dietz (2012), pp. 79–89.

organizations within the working-class movement, including sports groups, militarized during the 1920s. This took place in the context of the "Stalinization" of the KPD promoted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), with which the anti-Stalinist, "ultra-left" faction around Ruth Fischer and Arkadi Maslow, as well as the "reconciliators" around Heinrich Brandler, Ernst Meyer and August Thalheimer, were ultimately cut off.[26]

This also manifested in the language of the party press, which used increasingly military and martial vocabulary: It was a confession to the revolutionary class war under the banner of the communist party. Their banners called: "Working sportsmen are soldiers of the revolution, Being a working sportsman means being a class warrior."[27]

Here, the aggressive, military-style wording transforms sport from hobby to war activity. It is but a small step from sports to the paramilitary group known as the *Rote Frontkämpferbund*, Alliance of Red Front-Fighters, a reservoir for communist soldiers from World War I. The Alliance walked at the front of KPD demonstrations like a military unit:

> *RFB* [Alliance of Red Front-Fighters, DW] *marching at the forefront*
>
> *Mannheim, 1 May.* [...] The KPD's demonstration was carried by fighting spirit, of which evidence was given by the fact that the Alliance marched in full uniform at the head of the demonstration.[28]

In his PhD thesis, Kurt Schuster states that the "revolution had vanished into demonstrations," equipped with military aesthetics, "[i]n a sense, the army of the party is nothing other than a mass demonstration that is always available."[29] Alliance members demonstrated strength and unity and served as role models for the rest of the organized comrades. The ideal of a political formation that speaks through language and slogans manifests itself in the testosterone-charged paramilitary parade of the Red Front-Fighters. Here, the vision of armed revolution and a Soviet state lives on in the costume of uniform.

CONCLUSION

Slogans are tools that originate in military practices. The daily use of slogans, especially in centralized political organizations like the KPD, is related to the original meaning of the term, and slogans continue to bear some military attributes. Spoken in unison, slogans unify, standardize, and exert discipline over a crowd,

26 See Winkler: *Der Schein der Normalität* (1985), pp. 418–425; and Hermann Weber: *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus: Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt (1969), pp. 161–164.

27 "Der Marsch der 20 000 roten Sportler", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 3, 1930), p. 2.

28 "Riesenbeteiligung im ganzen Reiche", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 3, 1930), p. 2.

29 Kurt G.P. Schuster: *Der Rote Frontkämpferbund 1924–1929*, Düsseldorf: Droste (1975), p. 44.

similar to military formations. The distribution of slogans via pamphlets and other publications, like the press, posters, and banners published by the Central Committee of the KPD, further abet centralization and standardization. Slogans are flexible and variable textual forms that adapt to different media easily and circulate quickly. When extracted from or embedded within longer texts, slogans preserve and circulate essential short phrases on streets, posters, in shouting voices, on living advertising columns, or printed on cattle. In the case of the slogan, we see that the use of short and punchy communications to organize masses of people is not necessarily a willful shortening or reduction, but a requirement that is conditioned by media ecology and circulation technology.

MASS VIOLENCE IN PAMPHLETS

JULIANE PRADE-WEISS, VLADIMIR PETROVIĆ





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Juliane Prade-Weiss, Vladimir Petrović: "Mass Violence in Pamphlets", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 141–156.

RIGHT OR WRONG



1 2014 propaganda poster urging Crimeans to vote in the Crimean status referendum: "16 March, we choose" and two maps, linked by "or."

Two months after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in February 2014, a status referendum was held urging Crimeans to vote in favor of breaking away from Ukraine. A propaganda poster calling upon Crimeans to vote reads "16 March, we choose." The poster presents two maps, linked by the word "or," as the alternatives proposed by the referendum: either a National Socialist Crimea, or a Russian Crimea. The poster frames the vote to remain with Ukraine, and against the Russian occupation, as tantamount to support for National Socialism. This image policy is underlined by an ambivalent choice of words: the Russian verb used on the poster means "we choose," but also "we cull" or "select," a practice associated with eradicating what is unwanted. The polysemic verb casts doubt onto the identity of the "we" speaking in the poster: is it the Crimeans who are choosing or rather the Russian occupying forces and their local allies, for whom the referendum is an opportunity to target resistance? In other words, the poster contains an ill-concealed threat while presenting the illusion of democratic choice.

The poster presents false alternatives, of course: the choice is not between going back to past atrocities or forward into a bright future under Russian rule. However, both the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine have been presented against the backdrop of these alternatives. Yet merely stating the obvious – that the historical alternatives given are false – warrants no understanding of why references to historical authority feature promi-

nently in propaganda pamphlets in general, and in Russian propaganda justifying its attacks on Ukraine in particular.

The association of Ukraine with National Socialism, and of Russia with liberty, features prominently in this propaganda. Putin reiterates the historical narrative underlying the imagery of the 2014 poster in his claim in 2022 that the Russian invasion serves to "denazify" Ukraine[1] in order to prevent a "genocide" of Russians.[2] This claim seeks to justify the invasion of Ukraine by casting it as a continuation of the successful battle against National Socialist Germany in World War II, the mainstay of both Communist Soviet and Russian national memory politics that legitimizes the status quo.[3] Analyzing appeals to such historical authority in justifications of acts that seem all but legitimate requires taking into account that, while these appeals may be factually and morally right or wrong, this distinction does not explain how they function. This is particularly obvious in captions.



2 Eugène Atget, *Rue de la Montagne – Sainte Geneviève*, Paris (n.d.).

1 Vladimir Putin: "Обращение Президента Российской Федерации [Address by the President of the Russian Federation]", in: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843 (February 24, 2022).

2 Vladimir Putin: "Обращение Президента Российской Федерации [Address by the President of the Russian Federation]", in: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828 (February 21, 2022).

3 Matthias Schwartz, Nina Weller, Heike Winkel: "After Memory: Introduction", in: *After Memory: World War II in Contemporary Eastern European Literatures*, ed. by Matthias Schwartz, Nina Weller, Heike Winkel, Berlin: de Gruyter (2021), pp. 1–20, p. 6.

> With Atget, photographic records begin to be evidence in the historical [process] [*Prozess*]. This constitutes their hidden political significance. [...] At the same time, illustrated magazines begin to put up signposts [...] – whether these are right or wrong is irrelevant. For the first time, captions become obligatory.[4]

Whether captions are "right or wrong" in terms of naming what the image shows is "irrelevant" for the semantization of images. Captions are speech acts rather than mere descriptions because they inscribe photographs into the "historical process," into the articulation of the past as a narrative that leads to the present. This "political significance" of captions is particularly crucial – and hardly "hidden" – in images on propaganda pamphlets that seek to justify mass violence. Such pamphlets often frame their discourse as legitimate by appealing to the authority of seminal texts of the cultural canon. Appeals to authority are often a call to violent action by gesturing towards a historical example and carving out the prospect of the desolate consequences of inaction based on identificatory historical narratives. The story they tell about mass violence is not just that it has been done before, which is factually right, but also that, therefore, it must be done again – which does not easily seem right.

In pamphlets that seek to justify mass violence, the question of "right or wrong" captions is both simple and complicated. While they are often factually, and always legally and morally wrong, authority within a cultural canon transcends the question of "right or wrong" because it is always subject to construction. Our main hypothesis is that justifications of mass violence often invoke and, at the same time, construct historical authority by referencing and re-interpreting key elements of cultural memory. To outline this in the following, we scrutinize a heterogeneous corpus that comprises propaganda posters, murals, websites, and leaflets distributed in print as well as online. While few of them fall under the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s description of the term "pamphlet" as a "short printed work of several pages fastened together without a hard cover," they do fall in line with the *OED*'s further outline of this medium as "of a polemical or political nature."[5] The rationale of our choice of text and image media builds on the fact that "the hybrid quality of the modern pamphlet" must be taken into account,[6] which can best be done by distinguishing between materiality and communicative form: "pamphlets are objects, the pamphletary is an affective politico-literary practice that engages publics and inspires them to act."[7] The different media we discuss are all pamphletary in that they are distributed to a wide public to arouse strong

4 Walter Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (Third Version)", in: *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 4, 1938–1940*, ed. by Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2003), pp. 251–283, p. 258; Walter Benjamin: "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (Dritte Fassung)", in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, Hermann Schweppenhäuser, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (1974), pp. 471–508, p. 458.

5 "Pamphlet", in: *Oxford English Dictionary*, www.oed.com/dictionary/pamphlet_n.

6 Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier: "Why Political Pamphlets Still Matter", in: *Public Seminar*, https://publicseminar.org/essays/why-political-pamphlets-still-matter/ (October 12, 2022), ¶ 7.

7 Gröppmaier: "Why Political Pamphlets Still Matter" (2022), ¶ 11.

emotions such as fear, anger, and vindictiveness, with the aim of inspiring audiences to approve of certain (nationalist, illiberal, fundamentalist) policies that endorse violence.

Four points need to be considered in order to understand the logic of references to historical authority in pamphletary media that seek to elicit participation in, support for, or at least tolerance of the perpetration of mass violence: first, cultural trauma is a seminal alley of invoking historical authority; second, what is said is as important as what remains unsaid in captions; third, emotional investment overrules historical fact (or the lack thereof); and finally, the construction of authority complicates a linear notion of temporality. Before all this, however, some fundamental concepts require clarification.

JUSTIFICATIONS

Mass violence is by scope, intensity, and complexity the most extreme form of conflict, exerted by groups of people in- and outside war. Mass violence is a descriptive concept developed in history and social sciences to a) understand the link between different forms of violence that occur during mass atrocities and b) avoid legal concepts such as genocide which may describe the same set of events but require proof of intent, which is often difficult and not the actual focus of social sciences and humanities. As Benjamin Valentino defines it: "Mass violence includes killings, but also forced removal or expulsion, enforced hunger or undersupply, forced labor, collective rape, strategic bombing, and excessive imprisonment."[8]

Such acts seem hard to justify yet still regularly occur, as in, for instance, the current conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine. During the twentieth century, between sixty and 150 million civilians died in mass killings alone, while there were approximately 34 million battle deaths in international and civil wars during the same period.[9]

After World War II, in the wake of the Shoah, divergent approaches analyzed political, economic, and psychosocial dynamics that cause or promote acts of mass violence, explored sanctioning and restorative justice, and highlighted the possibilities of memorialization. However, these efforts have proven insufficient to prevent further acts. Understanding the persistence of mass violence requires a focus on the transmission of discourses that justify it. While *acts* of mass violence alter political and socioeconomic realities inhabited by surviving victims, perpetrators, accomplices, and their descendants, *justifications* of mass violence establish the linguistic and heuristic parameters for their subsequent juridical, moral, and scholarly evaluation. Justifications thus contribute to perpetuating societal fault lines and set the frame for further conflict.

8 Christian Gerlach: *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2010), p. 1.

9 Benjamin A. Valentino: *Final Solutions: Mass Killings and Genocide in the 20th Century*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (2004), p. 1.

"Justification" is an umbrella term, subsuming divergent speech acts which have in common the fact that they seek to make mass violence appear as just, i.e., as the right thing to do. These speech acts include juridical legitimizations, moral vindications, political apologies, praises of superiority, populist incitements, military orders, downplaying, and screen memory narratives. Since mass violence perpetration is "a far-reaching social project" that "requires ideological justification" to encompass diverse actors and motives,[10] justifications of acts of mass violence are negotiated in intersecting key areas of the cultural canon such as the law, historiography, political propaganda, literary fiction, and – of course – popular media such as pamphlets.

Justifications of mass violence given by perpetrators are often dismissed, in politics, media, and research, as pretexts distracting from manifest material, political, and/or geo-strategic agendas. Yet while such agendas do often underlie mass violence, this does not explain what motivates large parts of a population to participate in, abet, or tolerate atrocities. Crucial for eliciting societal support are the reasons for committing mass violence that regimes communicate.

The critical role for ideology, here, is to provide some kind of *justificatory narrative* for the violence: a set of ideas about the meaning, character, and context of mass killing that makes it appear like a *strategically* and *morally* justifiable course of action."[11] Justifications spread by propaganda provide a discursive infrastructure that enables diverse actors with different reasons for participating in, abetting, or tolerating mass violence to voice their actions in terms of one common project. The discursive infrastructure of justifications allows them to view their individual motives (such as profit, appreciation, or acting out hate) and themselves as "just." Yet justifications are "not merely by-products or rationalizations of other 'deeper' motives or causes" but, rather, "vitally rooted in pre-existing ideology."[12] Justifications of mass violence capitalize on widely accepted values and norms, such as striving for security,[13] pity for the weak, and, notably, the authority of identificatory historical models. Finally, "justifications of war are more than 'cheap talk' without normative meaning. Even propaganda refers to an audience which constitutes itself around certain normative expectations."[14]

10 Uğur Ümit Üngör, Kjell Anderson: "From Perpetrators to Perpetration: Definitions, Typologies, and Processes", in: *The Routledge International Handbook of Perpetrator Studies*, ed. by Susanne C. Knittel, Zachary J. Goldberg, London: Routledge (2020), pp. 7–22, pp. 8–11.

11 Jonathan Leader Maynard: *Ideology and Mass Killing: The Radicalized Security Politics of Genocides and Deadly Atrocities*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2022), p. 63.

12 Maynard: *Ideology and Mass Killing* (2022), pp. 63–64.

13 A. Dirk Moses: *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2021).

14 Lothar Brock, Hendrik Simon: "Justifications of the Use of Force as Constitutive Elements of World Order – Points of Departure, Arrivals, and Moving Destinations", in: *The Justification of War and International Order: From Past to Present*, ed. by Lothar Brock, Hendrik Simon, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2021), pp. 503–524, p. 523.

INVOKING CULTURAL TRAUMA

Formulating a "cultural trauma" is a seminal alley for invoking historical authority.[15] Pamphletary media have been instrumental in constructing images of the enemy and soliciting emotional participation in Early Modern religious and political conflict, such as the Thirty Years' War. And they still play this role in the "historical process" in modern conflicts, such as the 1990s Yugoslav wars, notably in the negotiation of the strategic bombing of Belgrade. Strategic bombing comprises at least two traumatic aspects: manifest destruction and the helplessness in the face of an unpredictable and largely unavoidable danger. Such shared experience has a potential to significantly reshape a collective identity, as in the instances of Guernica and Dresden. Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, has undergone aerial bombardment multiple times: in 1941 by the Axis powers, in 1943/44 by the Allies, and in 1999 by NATO. The 1941 Nazi bombardment was named "Operation Judgment" (*Operation Strafgericht*), invoking apocalyptic biblical as well as juridical associations, in order to legitimize mass violence. The bombardment holds a central place in Serbian cultural memory, curated, for instance, in an exhibition at the Belgrade City Museum opened in 2021 on the eightieth anniversary of the 1941 bombing. General Alexander Löhr, chief organizer of the campaign, was put on trial in Belgrade and given a death sentence in the immediate postwar period.

The legacy of the Allied bombings is more complex. During the war, propaganda of the Serbian collaborationist government portrayed the Allied bombers as cowardly killers of children. The April 16–17, 1944 attack was given special prominence as it coincided with Orthodox Easter, notably in one poster with hardly any caption. It depicts a mother holding a dead infant, asking: "Why?" The fact that the poster's caption indicates solely a date and a place suggests that the audience was deemed sensitized enough to grasp the reference.

The 1943/44 Allied bombing was rarely mentioned during the Communist period. Tito's government was a player in the Allied camp, the bombings were coordinated with its forces and were thus a potentially delegitimating episode. Furthermore, Yugoslav partisans presented themselves as the sole liberators of their country and were therefore prone to downplay any assistance. But despite the official repression of memory, the Allied bombing was still not forgotten half a century later, as became apparent during the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia. More limited in scope than its World War II predecessors, this campaign nonetheless had lasting effects, particularly on cultural memory. This time, Serbia was bombed by an alliance composed of both the former Allies (USA, UK, France) and former Axis powers (Germany, Italy). Among the posters denouncing the 1999 bombing, the "Why?" one also made an appearance, this time without the date, because the bombings occured during Easter 1999 as well. The repeated representation of the 1941 Axis bombings in pamphletary literature and other media

15 Jeffrey C. Alexander: "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma", in: idem: *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press (2004), pp. 1–30.



3 Propaganda poster denouncing the 1943/44 Allied bombing of Belgrade: "Why?", bottom line "Belgrade, April 16–17, 1944".

created a topos of national victimization into which the 1999 bombings could be fed.

Propaganda from Milošević's regime during the 1990s Yugoslav war invoked the World War II bombardments, equating NATO with the Nazis (for instance, in combining both flags), and posturing as a bastion of liberty under assault by the New World Order.[16] The authority of the international condemnation

16 "Serb Art Blossoms Under Bombs", in: *truthinmedia.org*, Special Truth in Media Global

of Nazi crimes and of national trials against Nazi war criminals served as the legitimizing backdrop to portray NATO as a war criminal.

The 1999 bombing of Belgrade has been given an identificatory meaning by the paradoxical operation of emphasizing its singularity while portraying it as a repetition of the 1941 and 1943/44 bombings. To be bombed by both sides fighting a war consecutively, and subsequently by all of them together at once, is the narrative backdrop against which the singularity of a national identity was and still is claimed. The 1999 bombing, and its propaganda linkage to the two series of air raids in World War II, had a lasting effect. NATO accession is a distinctly unpopular policy in Serbia.

In the Belgrade cityscape, the ruined buildings of the Serbian General Staff complex, the police headquarters, and the state television building still testify to the bombing. In the vicinity of the destroyed TV headquarters, a mural serves as a caption for the ruin in the background, articulating the "political significance" of the view onto the destroyed house in the "historical process" in stating: "There is no statute of limitations for the NATO crime," suggesting that the 1999 bombing does not become juridically or morally obsolete with time. The mural contributes to rendering the bombing a lasting wound, an identificatory cultural trauma.

So, too, does a commemorative stone invoking the World War II "Why?" poster, asking both Serbian authorities and NATO "Why" TV employees had to die in the air raid.

In pamphlets, murals (a seminal form of pamphletary literature since antiquity), popular media, and political discourse, the 1999 bombing of Belgrade is negotiated as a cultural trauma, i.e., as a trauma response that "occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity."[17] The victimization caused by the 1999 bombing has been shaped into just such a "horrendous event" in Serbian collective memory. However, the pamphletary media discussed so far denounce rather than justify mass violence. This brings us to the second of the recurrent dynamics.

SAID AND UNSAID

What captions say is as important as what remains unsaid. Appeals to authority in calls for mass violence regularly rely on appropriating the position of victim in reinterpretations of historical narratives that lay claim to moral virtue. There was no doubt a morally and legally questionable targeting of civilians in all three Belgrade air raids. Yet, the crucial question is how these victimizations are decontextualized in their repeated representation in different media. The representation of the 1941 bombings by the Axis powers became a "premediation," shaping the

Watch Bulletins on NATO's War on Serbia, http : / / www . truthinmedia . org / Kosovo / War / PhotoAlbum/photos-art.html (September 9, 2010).

17 Alexander: "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma" (2004), p. 1.



4 This poster, originally from the 1990s, has been repurposed for anti-NATO activism, circulating on reddit and other internet platforms.

representation of later bombings in line with a narrative of national victimization that allows people to bypass the question of *why* Belgrade was bombarded.

> [E]xistent media which circulate in a given society provide schemata for new experience and its representation. [...] What is known about an event which has turned into a site of memory, therefore, seems to refer not so much to what one might cautiously call the 'actual event,' but instead to a



5 Mural in front of bombarded Serbian state TV headquarters, Belgrade (15 August 2021): "There is no statute of limitations for the NATO crime" (NATO zločin ne zastareva).

canon of existent medial constructions, to the narratives, images and myths circulating in a memory culture.[18]

The "Why" trope offered an emotional response that, paradoxically, precluded public debate that could answer the question: Why was Belgrade bombed in 1943/44? Why was Serbia bombed in 1999? How many people died in this bombing? In fact, of the 454 civilian victims, 219 were Albanians and 207 Serbs. How is it that the number of Albanian victims is higher than that of Serbian victims? And what about the fact that over 6,500 Albanian civilians were killed by Serbian security forces during the bombing?[19] Where are their bodies? In light of such

18 Astrid Erll: "Remembering across Time, Space, and Cultures: Premediation, Remediation and the 'Indian Mutiny'", in: *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. by Astrid Erll, Ann Rigney, Berlin: de Gruyter (2009), pp. 109–138, p. 111.

19 "Human losses during the NATO bombing", in: *Humanitarian Law Centre*, http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=19413 (March 23, 2012).



6 Monument commemorating the death of employees during a 1999 NATO air raid, asking "Why?" (15 August 2021).

hard questions, the Serbian public prefers to deliberate over the dilemma of how to join the EU without also joining NATO. Meanwhile, the West contemplates not the integration, but the pacification of Serbia. Unaddressed and unprocessed, the 1999 bombing stands in the way of dialogue. Claiming the historical position of victimhood allows for a sidelining of contextual questions in favor of justifying acts of (mass) violence. This is, of course, a problematic strategy in that it weaponizes the moral consent that victims of violence need in order to be heard and given credit. A response to this strategy of perpetrators should not consist in abolishing moral consent but rather in taking into account that targeting morality serves the very purpose of producing outrage and emotionalizing debate.

EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT OVERRULES FACTS

A seminal structure in the transgenerational transmission of trauma and the sequalae of perpetration is repression, denial, and non-mourning that become manifest in "gaps in or deformations of language: incoherences, discontinuities, disruptions."[20] Linguistic discontinuities manifest the nescience of facts. Both facilitate decontextualization and the "remediation" of historical references, i.e., their representation, "again and again, over decades and centuries, in different media"[21] that renders them pillars of a memory culture – which, in turn, premediates the representation of future events. Gaps in these constructions of historical authority are filled with emotions tied to texts and icons of historical authority, which leads us to the third aspect: emotional investment overrules historical fact (or the lack thereof).

A striking example is the self-victimizing seminal to the identification of members of the German populist *Querdenker* movement protesting anti-COVID-19 policies, with Sophie Scholl, one of the authors of the White Rose group pamphlets that called upon Germans for peaceful resistance against the Nazi regime. Correspondingly, one of the signs displayed at a rally against COVID-19 policies in Berlin, Germany, on August 29, 2020, stated: "The silent majority is the greatest danger," a quote falsely attributed to Sophie Scholl, a key member of the Munich White Rose anti-Nazi resistance group.



7 *Querdenker* protesting anti-COVID-19 policies (29 August 2020).

20 Gabriele Schwab: *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*, New York: Columbia University Press (2010), p. 53.

21 Erll: "Remembering across Time, Space, and Cultures" (2009), p. 111.

In their six 1943 pamphlets, the White Rose relied heavily on appeals to authorities from the cultural canon, such as Goethe, Schiller, Aristotle, Lao-Tse, as well as the Bible to elicit support from Germans. The 2020 protests against COVID-19 policies, in turn, reference Scholl as a seminal figure of civil disobedience in German memory culture in a bid to lend legitimacy to the cause. The reference is lopsided, given that Scholl and other members of the resistance group were executed by Nazi authorities in 1943, while the 2020 protesters were guarded by police. Moreover, a considerable portion of the *Querdenker* movement is associated with right-wing extremism that is anything but critical of Germany's Nazi past. This inconsistency in the construction of a pedigree of civil disobedience and victimization by state forces is filled in with the pathos of righteousness and the indignation of the misunderstood.

A Bavarian branch of the leading German right-wing populist party AfD sought to appropriate the historical and moral authority ascribed to Scholl in German cultural memory on a 2017 virtual election poster. Quoting from the first of the historical White Rose pamphlets, the poster claims that "Sophie Scholl would vote for the AfD."[22]

The appropriation of the cultural memory of an anti-Nazi resistance group on a poster published by a right-wing populist party whose members often publicly downplay National Socialism[23] and the Shoah[24] was met with media outrage. As was a speech given by a woman who introduced herself as "Jana from Kassel" at a 2020 rally against COVID-19 restrictions in Hanover, in which she stated: "I feel like Sophie Scholl because I have been active in the resistance for months" (*Ich fühle mich wie Sophie Scholl, da ich seit Monaten aktiv im Widerstand bin*).[25]

This statement disregards the fact that Scholl was only able to be active in the resistance against National Socialism for a few months before being sentenced to death and executed. What is crucial is her reference to Scholl in terms of feelings since they are impenetrable to falsification by historical fact. She also portrays herself as a victim by bursting into tears and fleeing the stage after encountering objection to her identification with Scholl.[26] "Jana from Kassel" re-mediates a feeling of resistance into political resistance and appeals to the historical authority of Scholl in German cultural memory to render her sentiments valid of societal approval.

22 Jacques Tilly: "Über das extremistische Weltbild der Rechtspopulisten von AfD bis Trump", in: *Humanistischer Pressedienst*, https://hpd.de/artikel/ueber-extremistische-weltbild-rechtspopulisten-afd-trump-14009 (January 23, 2017).

23 Juliane Prade-Weiss: "Staging Enmity: Reading Populist Productions of Shame with Jelinek's *On the Royal Road*", in: *Open Research Europe* 3/23, 10.12688/openreseurope.15469.2 (2023), pp. 12–13.

24 Rupert Wiederwald: "Vogelschiss in der Geschichte: Der AfD-Partei- und Fraktionsvorsitzende Alexander Gauland verharmlost in einer Rede die Herrschaft der Nationalsozialisten. Politiker anderer Parteien sind empört", in: *Deutsche Welle*, https://www.dw.com/de/gauland-bezeichnet-ns-zeit-als-vogelschiss-in-der-geschichte/a-44054219 (June 2, 2018).

25 DiveEntertainment47: "Jana aus Kassel fängt an zu weinen als der Ordner aus Hannover sie wegen ihrer Rede konfrontiert", in: *Youtube.com*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJzloVidwVQ (November 21, 2020), 00:00:01–00:00:12.

26 DiveEntertainment47: "Jana aus Kassel" (2020), 00:01:10–00:01:19.

This remediation points out an important aspect of references to authority: while authors refer to historical authorities with a particular (conscious) intent, they convey a plurality of implications – narrative patterns, performance structures, moral validations – that remain implicit, and yet active. Protesting against COVID-19 policies is not the same as justifying mass violence. The protester's reference is nonetheless interesting for the present purpose precisely because she skips the mass violence context of the White Rose pamphlets. This lacuna spells out a resistance to acknowledging or even an outright denial of the widespread perpetration and complicity with Nazi crimes that is transgenerationally transmitted in German society and becomes manifest in right-wing policies. This takes us to the final point.

WARPING TIME

Constructions of authority in cultural memory complicate linear temporality. In referring to historical models in authoritative texts, justifications of mass violence shape the notion of a continuous pre-history. Appeals to authority are crosspoints of re-interpretations of the past and a pre-shaping of the future because they rearrange what Benjamin calls the "historical process." An appeal to what appears to be an ancient element of cultural memory, such as a psalm, is often an act of modernization, re-interpreting the past as a utopian model for present agendas. A striking case in point is the propaganda rhetoric of the so-called Islamic State (IS), which references the Crusades, as, for instance, in the 2014 issue of the magazine *Dabiq,* entitled "The Failed Crusade."[27] Dabiq is a town in the north of Syria where, according to a medieval prophecy cited by the IS, Muslim and non-Muslim armies will meet for the final battle, after which Constantinople and Rome – the centers of Eastern and Western Christianity – will fall. The IS fashions itself after this apocalyptic army, disregarding the inconvenient fact that Istanbul has been under Muslim rule since the fifteenth century, and focusing solely on Rome. The pamphlet grants a clear vision of the mass violence to come: "We will conquer your Rome, break your crosses, and enslave your women, by the permission of Allah, the Exalted." The West's attempts to fight back are cast in terms of a futile crusade: "this weak, pitiful, and abortive crusade will be the final one."[28]

> It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the terms *harb al-salib* (the war of the cross) and *al-salibiyyun* (crusaders) entered the Arabic lexicon and, even then, only through an appropriation of European terms [...] in response to an [...] expansionist Europe who now threatened the sovereignty [...] of the Ottoman empire.[29]

27 "Reflections on the Final Crusade", in: *Dabiq* 4 (2014), pp. 32–44.
28 "Reflections on the Final Crusade" (2014), p. 37.
29 Akil N. Awan: "Weaponising the Crusades: Justifying Terrorism and Political Violence", in: *Engaging the Crusades Vol. 2: The Crusades in the Modern World*, ed. by Mike Horswell, Akil N. Awan, London: Routledge (2020), pp. 4–24, p. 6.

Invoking the victimization of Muslims by the cultural trauma of the Crusades, which are indeed a burden to Western church history, might appear to be a reference to ancient history. However, the historical reference cannot actually build on any medieval notion of victimization since the Crusades did not stand out to contemporaries from the many other armed conflicts. What the IS cites is no ancient past but rather a nineteenth-century, anti-imperial historiographical narrative. The reference to the Crusades can be viewed as "audience-tuning," i.e., as an "adjustment of communication to an intended audience" of their propaganda,[30] that audience being, not least, the West. The IS rhetoric responds to president George W. Bush's invocation of the Crusades after the 9/11 attacks: "This crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while."[31] Consequently, in IS rhetoric, all non-IS forces are crusaders, which leads to surprising syncretisms such as the "Jewish crusader, former US Secretary of State and US National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger,"[32] who may not have the capital of Catholic Christianity at the forefront of his interests.

Rather than outright ideological conviction, references to historical authority might well be mere pretexts to material or strategic interests. Yet even pretexts are texts that carry implications that shape reception. It is, therefore, too easy to dismiss them as empty talk, since they are part of an ongoing transmission of justificatory terminology, narratives, and heuristics. References to authority that justify or call for (mass) violence profoundly blend times and places to construct fault lines. They require attention because these new fault lines might readily appear to be authoritative cultural heritage, even to critical voices.

30 Erll: "Remembering across Time, Space, and Cultures" (2009), p. 123.

31 George W. Bush: "Address upon Arrival [from Camp David], White House South Lawn", in: *C-Span*, https://www.c-span.org/video/?166087-1/terrorist-attacks-us (September 16, 2001), 00:10:15–00:10:26.

32 "Reflections on the Final Crusade" (2014), p. 39.

ACCESS

IDA WELLS'S PRINT ACTIVISM

FLORIAN SEDLMEIER





European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Florian Sedlmeier: "Ida Wells's Print Activism", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 159–171.

ACTIVISM/WRITING

Activism is a multilayered social practice. It requires bodily acts of public defiance that often include attention-generating performances and theatrical action. It may also mandate various uses of language. Slogans, for instance, can be chanted and put on placards. If an activist practice wants to sustain itself and potentially change the status quo by implementing a binding law, language needs to take the form of writing. According to the *OED*, activism means "the use of vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change."[1] The writing necessary for such "vigorous campaigning" relates to different genres, including manifestoes, memoirs, and petitions. These depend on various channels of distribution, from the street to the store, and publication media, from brochures and leaflets to periodicals and books. As such, the genres of activist writing are embedded in media environments with other texts that perpetuate the status quo.

Activist texts, that is, are both reactive and performative speech acts in the multilayered social practice of activism. Activism identifies and reinforces social schisms, which inform political legislation and are also represented in publications. If activist texts demand change, they always already exist in reaction to other texts. This dialogic quality has been established in text-based theories of public deliberation by scholars such as Michael Warner or Janet Lyon, who build on Jürgen Habermas.[2] If activism needs a cause and exposes schisms, however, it exists in a constellation of Manichean partisanship, which also tests the limits of deliberation. This polar constellation requires the monitoring of the other side. While contemporary reading publics and voting blocs might constitute themselves in autochthon spaces reinforced by algorithmic selection, feeding you the news and views of the like-minded clicker, the monitoring points to a complementary aspect: proponents of a cause are no less invested in reading their opponents. They read and write about other peoples' news, too. If there are metaphorical filter bubbles and echo chambers, they often know of each other's existence. Activist writers cite the other side, deploying a tactic I call re-cycling – a specific iteration of rewriting that repurposes, extends, and comments on a news cycle. Re-cycling, I hold, is a concrete textual tactic of activist media monitoring.[3]

With these reflections and concepts in mind, I want to unfold my case study, which is situated in the United States of the late nineteenth century. Framed by racial segregation, the social conditions for activist practice and writing were partisan to the extreme at this moment of blatant white supremacy. The iterative quality of racist hate crimes and concerted newspaper propaganda in the South

1 "Activism", in: *Oxford English Dictionary*, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/activism_n.

2 Michael Warner: *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York: Zone Books (2002); Janet Lyon: *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press (1999); Jürgen Habermas: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into A Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger, Cambridge: Polity Press (1989 [1962]).

3 The concepts of re-cycling and monitoring result from a collaboration with Curd Knüpfer, a political scientist who analyzes the media conditions of political communication in the digital public sphere.

restricted both activist practice and textual public deliberation. In the general context of serial criminality, Mark Seltzer shows that the public sphere cannot be dissociated from concrete public places, where the threat of deadly violence with its random ubiquity affects bodily mobility and creates a "pathological public sphere."[4] For the specific case of Ida B. Wells, this is crucial. Initially an activist practitioner and investigative journalist on the ground, death threats forced her to give up her newspaper, flee to the North, and recalibrate her investigative print activism as a media criticism. Along these lines, I conceive of her posthumously published autobiography *Crusade for Justice* (1970) as a professional memoir, that is: as the vocational self-presentation of an activist and journalistic entrepreneur. Read this way, her account allows us to distill some generalizable features of activist practice and their relation to writing. Her pamphlets, exemplified by *Southern Horrors* (1892) and *A Red Record* (1895), I read as activist texts that deploy the tactics of re-cycling. Citing from other publications, they monitor the news cycles of a media environment and function as storage media.

OWNERSHIP/VOCATION

The title of Wells's professional memoir, *Crusade for Justice*, may itself suggest a tactic of re-cycling. "Crusade" evokes the cross burnings, which were part of the ritualistic lynch murders perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan and one of the vigilante militia group's general tactics of intimidation, as Robert Kahn shows.[5] In her account, Wells dramatizes her curriculum vitae from working as a schoolteacher to becoming an investigative reporter, newspaper entrepreneur, and media critic. The story of her print activism is thus also a story of professional aspiration, of becoming a writer who can make a living. Rejecting the role of the educator, one of the key occupations assigned to women regardless of the color of their skin, she describes her journalism as "an outlet through which to express the real 'me'."[6] In the chronology of her professional memoir, this Romanticist conception of writing as a means of creative self-expression follows the presentation of an act of public defiance on a train ride. When asked to give up her seat on a train by a conductor, Wells refuses to do so, resists her forceful removal to the smoker's car, where other Black Americans were seated, by biting the conductor's hand, and eventually gets off the train. With Jim Crow laws and segregated cars not yet officially implemented, she decided to sue the railroad company. After her legal counsel, "a colored lawyer," "had been bought off by the road," she hires "a white one" instead and succeeds in receiving "damages of five hundred dollars."[7] When she declines to settle the case, which would have granted her this fairly substantial

4 Mark Seltzer: "Serial Killers (II): The Pathological Public Sphere", in: *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1995), pp. 122–149, p. 124.

5 Robert A. Kahn: "The First Amendment Encyclopedia", in: https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/1105/cross-burning (2023).

6 Ida B. Wells: *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, ed. by Alfreda M. Duster, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2020 [1970]), p. 29.

7 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), p. 17.

sum, it is moved to the State Supreme Court, which charges her with the court costs. Conceived as a description of activist practice, the scene conveys a sense of unwavering principledness. If it exposes both the corruptibility of the Black American lawyer and the public relations concerns of a corporation, it also shows that activism strives to be incorruptible. At the same time, activist practice, which by definition has no interest in economic profit, may radicalize a corporate principle: financial compensation would have to be reinvested to further the principled cause.

Importantly, Wells also frames her act of public defiance as a news event. She paraphrases and capitalizes the alliterated racialized headline "DARKY DAMSEL GETS DAMAGES" from a Memphis newspaper. Endowing her case with historical significance, she brands it as "the first case in which a colored plaintiff in the South had appealed to a state court since the repeal of the Civil Rights Bill by the United States Supreme Court."[8] Wells effectively positions her case as a precursor to the landmark decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), with which the Supreme Court will soon declare the southern doctrine of "separate but equal" constitutional and legitimize public segregation. The description of her act of public defiance, as both a news event and landmark case of sorts, serves to set her up as a historical figure, whose ensuing print campaign against lynching can be traced back to the moment when activist practice translates into filing a lawsuit against a corporation.

Joining a lyceum, Wells published her first articles under the pseudonym Iola for a newspaper and a church weekly in Memphis, Tennessee. She attributes the success of her early writing to her "plain, common-sense way," which recognizes the low but growing literacy rates among Black Americans in the aftermath of slavery and defines her style: "I never used a word of two syllables where one would serve the purpose."[9] Under late nineteenth-century conditions, activist writers of color developed a minimalist style that could be read to and understood by those who did not have the privilege of an education in literacy. The linguistic simplicity of Wells's writing preconditioned the circulation of her texts in other Black American newspapers and secured new commissions by editors in both northern and southern states. As her early success in publishing promises a journalistic career, Wells notes that the "monotony of the primary work [i.e., teaching, F.S.] began to grow distasteful" and that "the desire came to own a paper."[10] Activism in print is not merely about publicized writing, but about owning the means of production, especially in a media environment characterized by racial segregation. Teaming up with a pastor and a business manager, she buys a share in the *Free Speech and Headlight* and assumes editorial control in 1890. The more frequent use of possessive pronouns suggests a strong sense of both ownership and professional calling in these pages about the *Free Speech*: "my vocation," "my real

8 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), p. 18; orig. caps.

9 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), p. 22. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (https://nces.ed.gov/naal/lit_history.asp), the percentage of Black Americans aged 14 years and older who could not read was still 56.8% by 1890, down from 70% in 1880. By 1900, 44.5% of African Americans were still considered illiterate.

10 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), p. 29, 32.

vocation," "my paper."[11] After two years, Wells lost her teaching job over one of her editorials, which exposes the dire conditions in schools for children of color. Since she held editorial responsibility, her reputation was damaged, and the board of education denied her further employment. Activist authorship and editorship are precarious. One's signature can draw repercussions, here also from within the local Black community, which Wells claims to represent and holds accountable.

Partly making a virtue of economic necessity, partly following her vocation, Wells presents herself as a savvy entrepreneur and communal networker who almost triples the number of issues printed of the *Free Speech* within a year. She travels the borderlands of Arkansas and Tennessee in search of new subscribers and casts herself as a trailblazer, stressing the public perception of her historically novel position as a female agent and newspaper editor. Subscriptions were one method of securing readers. Another was to have so-called "news butchers" sell the paper on trains and in entertainment venues. Wells supplements her discussion of enhanced circulation with the decision to print "the *Free Speech* on pink paper to make it distinctive to a great many people who could not read." The use of pink paper, it would appear, visually distinguishes the publication and may motivate non-readers to become readers. But the choice of paper color produces an ironic twist. Wells relates that "some of the butchers were selling copies of the *Police Gazette* to many of the poor illiterates who wanted the *Free Speech* – they could not read for themselves, so they got to asking for the pink paper."[12] A national illustrated catering to a male audience with true-crime stories, sports reporting, and sexualized gossip, *The National Police Gazette* had switched to the same paper color by 1890.[13] In Wells's anecdote of print sales, activist practice, preconditioned by the perhaps tactical re-cycling of paper color, and successful print activism, preconditioned by reader competence, collide. But the anecdote may not only foreground reader competence, expose activist shortsightedness, and show the news butchers' profit focus. The *Police Gazette*'s entertainment value, for some readers, may also simply have trumped the activist value of the *Free Speech*.

FAILURE/SUCCESS

The paper-color publicity stunt raises the question of activist success and failure. Black American writers were heavily invested in building institutions of print, as Eurie Dahn notes in an important new book focusing on turn-of-the-century conditions of publication. Taking Wells as her opening example, Dahn emphasizes

11 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), pp. 36, 37, 41. The rhetoric of vocation, which Wells cites to express her ambition, originates in Romanticism and may continue to inform the self-positionings of entrepreneurial journalist-novelists in the late nineteenth century. On vocation see Günter Leypoldt: "'Sacred Calling' in Nineteenth-Century Authorship: Wordsworth, Emerson, Thackeray", in: *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* 67/3–4 (2021), pp. 599–637.

12 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), p. 38.

13 Brett McKay, Kate McKay: "America's First Popular Men's Magazine: The National Police Gazette", in: *The Art of Manliness*, www.artofmanliness.com/character/knowledge-of-men/americas-first-popular-mens-magazine-the-national-police-gazette (April 30, 2013).

the dialogic relations between Black presses and their readers, whose experiences under Jim Crow provided the raw material for journalistic activism. She describes these relations as "multiple networks" that leave their mark on intra-, inter-, and extratextual levels.[14] Yet the retrieval of networks and institutions of print may not always be possible. In another recent study, Elizabeth McHenry stresses the many stories of failure that are obscured by the prevalent narrative of Black social uplift: "even those authors we associate with *success* during these years struggled to place their literature" in a volatile publishing environment marked by compartmentalization, instability, and rejection.[15]

The case of the *Free Speech* provides a particularly cruel example in this regard. Wells's investigative reports and outspoken editorials provoked the ultimate form of censorship: the threat of her physical existence. While Wells travels in Mississippi, three of her acquaintances and friends are gruesomely murdered in Memphis, primarily because their grocery store is considered unwanted competition for a white business owner. She writes editorials and public letters that call on Black Americans to boycott white businesses (the boycott being another activist practice) and that monitor the sensationalist coverage of the event in the white press. Still traveling in the aftermath of the lynching, Wells makes plans to move her paper out of Memphis. But on a trip north she soon learns that a return to the South will be impossible. In her memoir, Wells connects the lynching to her professional ambitions. Just when she had proven that her newspaper could be profitable, the killing jeopardized her livelihood. Wells describes how she learned about her new precarious status in Memphis in a conversation with Timothy Thomas Fortune, who had republished some of her articles in his *The New York Age*, the leading Black American newspaper:

> "Haven't you seen the morning paper?" he replied. I told him no. He handed me a copy of the *New York Sun* where he had marked an Associated Press dispatch from Memphis. The article stated that [...] a committee of leading citizens had gone to the office of the *Free Speech* [...], destroyed the type and furnishings of the office, and left a note saying that anyone trying to publish the paper again would be punished with death. The article went on to say that the paper was owned by Ida B. Wells, a former schoolteacher, who was traveling in the North.[16]

The dramatic irony and layers of mediation deserve attention. News of her demotion reaches Wells in the form of a press release from a respected non-profit news agency that is reprinted in one of New York's leading papers. In one sense, the informational neutrality of the Associated Press release recognizes the unlikely story of an educator turned print activist. Beyond that, the demolition of

14 Eurie Dahn: *Jim Crow Networks: African American Periodical Cultures*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press (2021), p. 6.

15 Elizabeth McHenry: *To Make Negro Literature: Writing, Literary Practice, and African American Authorship*, Durham: Duke University Press (2021), p. 9; italics in the original.

16 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), p. 53.

the typesetter contrasts with the note that is left behind, which may have been handwritten or typed, and which threatens any attempt of future publication with physical death. Most crucial may be the sentence that identifies her as the owner of the paper. Her publicly known ownership of the *Free Speech* makes her into a news event and subjects her to the ceaseless news cycle of reported lynching. Preceding the Great Migration of the early twentieth century, during which six million Black Americans fled segregation and poverty in the South, the cited reference to her travels echoes the fate of fugitive slave peoples in earlier decades, who had to live in constant fear of being caught and returned. When activists become news themselves, they also become public targets.

It remains difficult to write a success story in the name of Ida B. Wells at her own historical moment. Deprived of her paper, partly forced into self-publishing, and with her professional memoir unpublished during her lifetime, she remained largely barred from impactful institutions. These included the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the most powerful Black American activist institution, which was initially established as an interracial project in 1909. In *The Crusade for Justice*, Wells details the selection process of founding members. She presents her exclusion as the result of a concerted effort, in which W. E. B. Du Bois plays the major role: "Those white men had done all they could to rectify the deliberate intention of Dr. Du Bois to ignore me and my work."[17] The building of durable institutions that consolidate activism has a social component. It collides with personal ambitions that fuel competition for leadership. Both in its printed and infrastructural dimensions, activism is inextricable from internal friction.

As for the *Free Speech*, no issue has survived. Except for articles reprinted elsewhere, its paper trail cannot be reconstructed. Put in general terms: Since print activism is subject to censorship, its capacity to be archived is threatened. At the same time, due to its tactical disposition, print activism is a process. It requires an adaptability to shifting conditions, which might make today's petition yesterday's news.

PAMPHLET/STORAGE

Against this biographical backdrop, Wells's shift to pamphleteering is significant in several respects. As an agent, the pamphleteer is "a solitary figure who addresses everyone" and who "assails the social order as a whole," as Luc Boltanski puts it. The pamphleteer's public engagement, he continues, relies on anchoring "words in a personal existential experience" to legitimize her critique of the institutions she chafes against.[18] While Wells can be regarded as a personification *par excellence* of this figure, the specific function ascribed to the pamphlet

17 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), pp. 274–285, p. 278.

18 Luc Boltanski: *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2011), p. 101. He extrapolates from Marc Angenot: *La Parole Pamphlétaire: typologie des discours modernes*, Paris: Payot (1982).

as a publication medium also deserves attention. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century U.S. literary history, pamphlets were pivotal to a range of discourses including abolitionism, class struggle, national independence, and suffragism. In his classic study on the American Revolution, historian Bernard Bailyn defines the pamphlet as an ideologically inflected publication medium, cheaper and more flexible than a book but more durable than a broadside. According to Bailyn, pamphlets are defined by their explicatory value. They lay bare the "assumptions, beliefs, and ideas" that inform the discursive "positions" created by "the manifest events" shaping a historical moment.[19] Often polemical in tone, the pamphlet accommodates a paper trail. Pamphlets belong to what literary historian Michael Warner in his seminal study of the role of print in eighteenth-century America calls "counterpublic literature." From within a civic culture of letters, pamphlets assume a key function. They present "a published debate [...] as public from two different perspectives." As instances of modern printed publicness, pamphlets transform the personal relation between discussants into the impersonal conduct of debate that constitutes a participatory public of "*in principle unknowable* others."[20]

The specific context of African American letters partly dovetails with Warner's argumentation. But it also requires some modification, since the status of pamphlets in Black American literary history is different. Peter Newman, Patrick Rael, and Phillip Lapsansky, who consider African American pamphlets before the Civil War, stress the versatility of the medium, which they situate, with Bailyn, between book and broadside. As a publication medium, the pamphlet "could be used by all manner of activists" and assemble different genres, including "an argumentative essay, a short narrative of events, or a bare-bones sketch of an organization's proceedings." Situated between argument, chronicle, and protocol, this textual pragmatics of the printed pamphlet, the editors note, "did little to displace the use of the spoken word" in Black American social circles.[21] Involvement in the printed public sphere remained crucial nonetheless. In the context of abolitionism, it preconditioned claims to citizenship and the right to equal participation in public life. More fundamentally, as Henry Louis Gates argues, Enlightenment discourse considered writing as "the *medium* of reason's expression." Demonstrating the ability "to write and publish imaginative literature," to write and publish to begin with, Black Americans could and had to claim their status as humans.[22]

19 Bernard Bailyn: *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (2017 [1967]), p. xxviii.

20 Michael Warner: *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1990), p. 40; orig. italics.

21 Peter Newman, Patrick Rael, Philip Lapsansky: "Introduction: The Theme of Our Contemplation", in: *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African-American Protest Literature, 1790–1860*, ed. by Peter Newman, Patrick Rael, Philip Lapsansky, New York: Routledge (2001), pp. 1–31, p. 2, 3. On the importance of antebellum Black American literary societies to compensate for low literacy rates, see Elizabeth McHenry: "'Dreaded Eloquence': The Origins and Rise of African American Literary Societies and Libraries", in: *Harvard Library Bulletin* 6/2 (1995), pp. 32–56.

22 Henry Louis Gates: "Editor's Introduction: Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes", in: *Critical Inquiry* 12/1 (1985), Special Issue: "Race," Writing, and Difference, pp. 1–20, p. 9; orig.

Wells's mentor, the charismatic orator and former slave Frederick Douglass, with whom she collaborated to challenge the exclusion of African Americans from the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, publicly performed many of his texts.[23] While always mindful of the still substantial numbers of illiterate Black Americans, Wells belonged to a different media environment. Her pamphlets stage that shift textually by publishing a private letter of endorsement she had received from Douglass. The enclosed letter positions her as his legitimate successor and authorizes her pamphlets as updated print activism. Already in the paratext, then, Wells conceives the pamphlet as a storage medium. By printing the letter it stores the legacy of Black activism and guarantees its transgenerational continuity in her name. But it also marks a shift. In contrast to the slave narratives published by Douglass and others, which had to be authenticated by white editors, paratexts of postbellum texts could now be legitimized by Black American peers.

MONITORING/RE-CYCLING

The storage function of the pamphlet also includes Wells's own writings. She makes clear as much in the first sentence of the preface to *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*: "The greater part of what is contained in these pages was published in *The New York Age* of June 25, 1892, in explanation of the editorial which the Memphis whites considered sufficiently infamous to justify the destruction of my paper, *The Free Speech*."[24] Published as an imprint of *The New York Age*, the pamphlet is introduced as the expanded edition of a previously published report. Its explicatory value relates to a previous news cycle, which revolved around the "editorial" that had provoked the "destruction" of her publishing outlet. Wells's print activism is one of archival reprinting, to the extent that it preserves a media history of the violence of censorship. The pamphlet is positioned as a publication medium that affords durability compared to the fleetingness of the periodical news cycle. Wells goes on to note that since her report had been printed in the New York newspaper "requests have come from all parts of the country that 'Exiled,' (the name under which it appeared) be issued in pamphlet form."[25] Generating a sense of nationwide demand and influence, Wells endows her individual authorship with a sense of historical importance. The engraving of her likeness on the title page contributes to that. It conveys a sense of self-assertiveness and self-exposure. As she makes clear in her professional memoir and in a dedication that follows the preface to her pamphlet, the republication and the recognition of her authorship

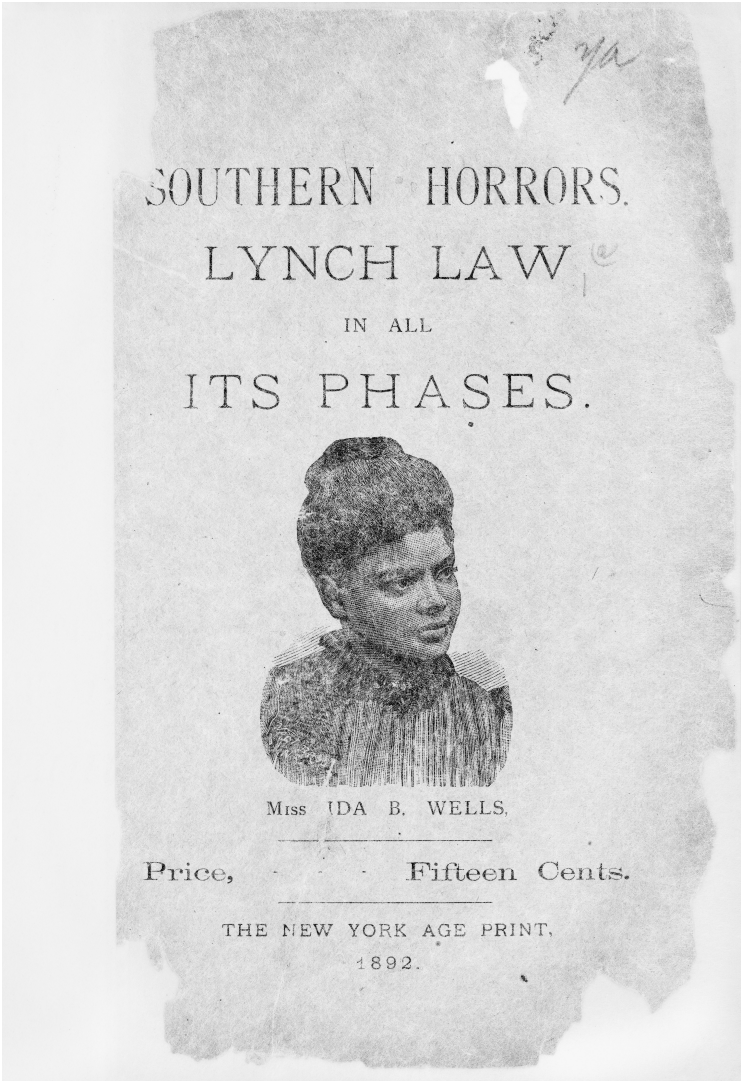
italics; p. 8.

23 For a commented edition of the relevant texts in this collaboration, see Ida B. Wells, Frederick Douglass, Irvine Garland Penn, Ferdinand L. Barnett: *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not Included in the World's Columbian Exposition*, ed. by Robert W. Rydell, Urbana: University of Illinois Press (1999).

24 Ida B. Wells: "Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases [1892]", in: idem: *The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader*, ed. by Mia Bay, New York: Penguin (2014), pp. 57–82, p. 58.

25 Wells: "Southern Horrors [1892]" (2014), p. 58.

resulted from the efforts of Black American women based in New York. With the dedication, this authorship is thus embedded in an alliance of Black female northern urbanites.



1 Miss Ida B. Wells: *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law In All Its Phases*, New York: The New York Age Print (1892), cover.

The retitling of the piece compared to the newspaper report is no less significant. While "Exiled" suggests an autobiographical account, the new title pairs the literary mode of the gothic ("Southern Horrors") with the historiographic one of a chronicle that traces the development of unlawful vigilante justice ("Lynch Law

in All Its Phases"). The chronicle and the gothic, I hold, complement the parodist tactics that Jacqueline Goldsby ascribes to *Southern Horrors*.[26] As a mode of historiography, the chronicle recounts and stores a succession of events. For Wells, it covers both the story of the enforcement of lynching and the fate of her career. As a mode of literary presentation, the gothic in nineteenth-century African American letters, according to Maisha Wester, resonates with the collective traumas of antebellum slavery and postbellum lynching.[27] Wells frequently cites at length the detailed descriptions of lynchings in southern papers, exposing her readers time and again to representations of these horrific scenes. In the late nineteenth century, the gothic is also tied to discourses of degeneracy and monstrosity, as Stephan Karschay demonstrates for the British context.[28] Wells's preface relates as much when it spells out its opening thesis, "The Afro-American is not a bestial race," which requires a complementary call upon "the conscience of the American people to a demand for justice to every citizen, and punishment by law for the lawless."[29] Here Wells's rhetoric effectively turns the tables, exposing the unlawfulness of the titular lynch law and suggesting an inversion: the bestial manifests itself in white vigilante violence. Simone Davis shows how Wells's text operates with similar inversions of "binary models."[30] As a structural principle and rhetorical device, this operation formalizes the Manichean inclination of activist writing in general.

Much of the textual composition of the pamphlet can be described as a press review and analysis of various news cycles, prompted by incidents of lynching and often underlying incidents of miscegenation. In the first of five chapters, Wells assembles the printed reactions to the *Free Press* editorial, which had tracked lynchings in several southern states between two issues of the paper and which had led to her demise. Her tactical re-cycling of newspaper clippings creates the textual effect of a collage that monitors the white southern press for its incisive rhetoric and exposes it as a metaphorical echo chamber. The chapter closes with a comment on miscegenation laws that leads into chapter two, where Wells recycles clippings from a fraction of the "thousands of such cases throughout the South," in which social pressures and racist prejudice criminalize romantic love and sexual relations across the color line.[31] Directing the attention of her readers to quotations from white women's confessions and testimonies as cited in the newspapers, her tactic of re-cycling reveals a complex psychosocial portrait of

26 Jacqueline Goldsby: *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2006), pp. 71–80. Goldsby reads Wells's *Southern Horrors* as a parody of the autobiography, more precisely the slave narrative, and of stunt reporting, a news-generating tactic deployed by writers such as Nelly Bly and Stephen Crane involving undercover reporting and media criticism.

27 Maisha L. Wester: *African American Gothic: Screams from Shadowed Places*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2012), esp. pp. 67–99.

28 Stephan Karschay: *Degeneration, Normativity, and the Gothic at the Fin de Siècle*, Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan (2015).

29 Wells: "Southern Horrors [1892]" (2014), p. 58.

30 Simone W. Davis: "The 'Weak Race' and the Winchester: Political Voices in the Pamphlets of Ida B. Wells-Barnett", in: *Legacy* 12/2 (1995), pp. 77–97, pp. 85–86.

31 Wells: "Southern Horrors [1892]" (2014), p. 63.

these women's anxieties that oscillate between racist prejudice, social pressures, and interracial desire. Accordingly, phrasings such as "These are her words" or "Note the wording" indicate that her print activism also relies on a conception of language as full of slippages and in need of interpretation.[32]

While Wells conveys a sense of historical self-importance, *Southern Horrors* did not resonate much, certainly not with a white audience. Lecture tours to Great Britain gave her some prominence and reception. In her professional memoir, the chapters on her time abroad not only rely on anecdotes and travelogue. They also reprint some of her newspaper writings (letters and editorials) and copy other press accounts of her public appearances. Once again, she stages herself as a media event and public persona, now writing for the white-owned *Inter-Ocean*, the "one journal in the United States [...] brave enough to print at length the doings, impressions, and reactions of a colored woman who was in another country pleading for justice in her own."[33] Wells's indictment of the press here reaches beyond the racial prejudice of the white southern papers. She also holds northern periodicals accountable for ignoring lynching, as well as for denying her the space to publish and advance her career.

In her next pamphlet, *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States, 1892–1893–1894*, self-published in Chicago in 1895 after her return from abroad, she deploys a different tactic of re-cycling. As its subtitle indicates, the pamphlet draws on the sociological method of statistics.[34] Tabulation also became a mode of presentation in the informational strand of newspaper reporting. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, Wells notes, "has made a specialty of the compilation of statistics touching upon lynching."[35] She uses the reputation of the newspaper to push back against potential disputes of the names and numbers. Binding the authority of her account to the numerical accounting of the *Tribune*, she declares:

> The purpose of the pages which follow shall be to give the record which has been made, not by colored men, but that which is the result of compilations made by white men, of reports sent over the civilized world by white men in the South. Out of their own mouths shall the murderers be condemned.[36]

Based on reports by white southern individuals, the "compilations" expose a media environment and bureaucratic machinery that keeps track of its committed crimes. The perpetrators record the evidence for their own potential conviction. If only there were a jury that deserves the name. In keeping "Judge Lynch's Record,"

32 Wells: "Southern Horrors [1892]" (2014), p. 63, 65.

33 Wells: *Crusade for Justice* (2020 [1970]), p. 108–109.

34 The context of Chicago is important since the city "was to American sociology what Manhattan was to American journalism", as Goldsby phrases it. See Goldsby: *A Spectacular Secret* (2006), pp. 71–80, p. 82.

35 Ida B. Wells: "A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States [1895]", in: idem: *The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader*, ed. by Mia Bay, New York: Penguin (2014), pp. 220–312, p. 229.

36 Wells: "A Red Record [1895]" (2014), pp. 228–229.

as the column in the edition of January 1, 1895 phrases it, the *Tribune* positions itself as a storage medium to the extent that it provides a criminological index, primarily organized by the chronology of months.undefinedFor her pamphlet, Wells reclaims a different storage modality. *A Red Record* may, as Goldsby suggests, follow "the layout style of the *Tribune's* annual report."[37] But Wells's re-cycling of the newspaper's collected records also reorganizes them under the rubrics of alleged crimes. The function of these rubrics is ambivalent. On the one hand, they direct attention to the contingencies involved in the construction of the punishable offenses, which they index. On the other hand, the catalog of keywords can be read as a parodist imitation of sensationalist newspaper headlines, with the exclamation points excluded. Wells not so much provides a parody of "the seeming neutrality of numbers."[38] After all, the names of individuals, their racialized identities, and the dates of their executions are retained in both the *Tribune* columns and *A Red Record*. Her critique of the *Tribune* can rather be found in the prominence her re-cycled tabulations give to the alleged causes. She exposes the arbitrary language of conviction that dominated the news cycles and the vigilante violence in the South. The implicit charge against the Chicago paper is different: the northern press may keep track of lynchings, but it does not properly account for them because it fails to analyze the social pathologies that legitimize these public spectacles of violence. Carrying out this work in her print activism,[39] Wells supplements the news cycles, which her pamphlets monitor and store. This specific use of the publication medium may be her lasting achievement in the history of print activism. Her professional memoir, in turn, provides an account of elements of activist practice that are valid also beyond their historical situatedness, not least because it relates these elements to publicist entrepreneurship in a changing media environment.

37 Goldsby: *A Spectacular Secret* (2006), pp. 85–86.
38 Goldsby: *A Spectacular Secret* (2006), p. 83.
39 For a succinct discussion of the lines of argument that constitute Wells's political theory see Alex Zamalin: *Struggle on Their Minds: The Political Thought of African American Resistance*, New York: Columbia University Press (2017), pp. 59–87.

GAGA META-MANIFESTOS

LAURA HANDL, CARSTEN JUNKER

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Laura Handl, Carsten Junker: "Gaga Meta-Manifestos", in: Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier (eds.): *Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Zürich: intercom Verlag (2024), 173–184.

LET US POSIT...

... that a critical (re-)assessment of activist writing – which we pursue in the framework of a politicized approach to form – requires a close look at the genre of manifesto.[1] The use of this genre and the expectations of it today are profoundly shaped by the history of the manifesto. The genre label that signals the form's cultural labors conjures up thoughts of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), manifestos of avant-garde movements such as Futurism and Dadaism,[2] and the manifestos of mid-twentieth-century social movements such as the Black Power movement and second-wave feminism.

Our inquiry is prompted by a recent upsurge of the manifesto that we observe in the politically polarized landscape of the current "Divided States of America" and beyond.[3] The manifesto in particular offers effective ways for authors to declare their positions and authorize their interventions in a public arena, thus creating (counter)publics. The current manifesto boom includes sociopolitical as well as cultural-critical and artistic manifestos and cuts across multiple media. Diverse in thematic outlook and broad in medial outreach, what most manifestos share is their insistence on structural and discursive intervention.

We zoom in on the Gaga Manifestos, published by *and* about the pop-culture artist Lady Gaga, as specific contemporary instantiations of the form, to highlight the changing conditions and potential effects of the genre of manifesto for feminist and queer theorizing. We look especially at the sense of time that these texts evoke, as well as at temporal constructions of the genre of manifesto and the historiography of feminism more generally.

In her book *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), which also contains a manifesto itself, not coincidentally, Sara Ahmed states that "the histories that bring us to feminism are the histories that leave us fragile."[4] In other words, conditions that call for recognizing patterns of structural and epistemic violence can transform embodied memories of discrimination and exclusion into agendas that call for change. A manifesto that aims to resonate with a current feminist (or generally activist) sensibility will have to disturb an undisturbed sense of personal and communal history-making, not to mention a linear narrative of social progress

1 This paper comes out of the research project "The Upsurge of the Manifesto in Contemporary Debates on Diversity in the United States," funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG, project number 501505288). Many thanks to Galia Yanoshevsky, who cordially invited us to present on Gaga Manifestos in a seminar session at Bar-Ilan University and so generously shared her ideas. We also extend our thanks to the useful comments by two anonymous readers and the editors of this volume, Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, and Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier.

2 The relationship between the rise of fascism and the avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century is an important one to address in the context of the manifesto. For further elaboration on the (proto-)fascist influences of Salvador Dali, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and Filippo Tomaso Marinetti as well as a reading of *Mein Kampf* (1926) as a manifesto, see Thomas Riggs (ed.): *The Manifesto in Literature – Volume 2: The Modernist Movement: 1900–WWII*, Detroit: St. James Press (2013).

3 Yahia Lababidi: "Never Forget, Never Remember", in: *Small Blows against Encroaching Totalitarianism: Volume One*, ed. by Daniel Levin Becker, San Fransisco: McSweeney's Books (2018), pp. 65–68, p. 65.

4 Sara Ahmed: *Living a Feminist Life*, Durham: Duke University Press (2017), p. 22.

associated with (white and heteronormative) feminism and other Western histories of activism. A known phenomenon of manifesto-writing is its ability to disorganize preconceived notions of temporality. With respect to manifestos of the French Revolution, Janet Lyon, in her influential book *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern* (1999), describes the creation of a "mythic present," a notion of time that interrupts preceding understandings of history and rejects them in favor of a revolutionary discourse that posits the inevitable arrival of a new era.[5] Lyon further describes the rhetorical link between politics and the arts from manifestos of avant-garde movements onward and reiterates the manifesto's general approach to memory and linear progress: "*historical teleology* is necessary to any radical artistic production, just as it inheres in revolutionary discourse as a principle of utopian inevitability."[6]

Whether artistic or political or both, authors typically manifest an inevitable agenda of subversion and, in its temporal framing, anticipate a diachronic narrative of progression. The modality of time in the manifesto – as well as in the narratives of its theorization – is, prototypically, one of necessary temporal advance. However, as an ever-variable genre, its uses can reframe this predictable sense of time as well as challenge the often unsurprising dogmatisms of its agendas. We argue that Gaga Manifestos are illustrative of these formal disturbances, taking up and further developing what queer-activist theorist Jack Halberstam began in his book *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender and the End of Normal* (2012): reading "gaga" as a potential concept with which to disturb the narratives of linear progress in feminism. Our analysis focuses not only on how Gaga Manifestos construct time in unconventional ways, but also on how the form lends itself to theorizing the potential effects of this phenomenon. Both the artist herself and the theorist Halberstam consciously mobilize the manifesto to critically, if playfully, irritate feminist and queer practices. As we argue, their manifestos can be read as meta-manifestos that anticipate what could be called gaga counterpublics.

LET US EXPAND...

... on the cultural meanings of Lady Gaga and the artist's manifesto work.[7] The term gaga, used by the artist born Stefani Germanotta, has been irrevocably linked to the persona of Lady Gaga for more than a decade. The artist has shaped popular culture since she stepped onto the musical scene in 2008 and achieved enormous fame within only a few years. Her commercial success has been

5 Janet Lyon: *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press (1999), p. 59. In this specific historical case, the mythification of the present also leads to a drowning out of grievances articulated by female (and, for that matter, enslaved) revolutionaries through an over-prioritization of a supposedly universalist rhetoric. See Lyon: *Manifestoes* (1999), pp. 59–62.

6 Lyon: *Manifestoes* (1999), p. 79, original emphasis.

7 We use the phrase of manifesto work here in analogy to Jane Tomkins's notion of the cultural work that popular fiction performs, providing its readers, among serving other functions, "a conception of themselves and of their history." Jane P. Tompkins: *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860*, New York: Oxford University Press (1986), p. 199.

attributed to her being perceived as a reinventor of pop music and performance art.[8] Lady Gaga herself has been open about her strategic use of provocative imagery, choreography, and language in videos, live performances, and cover shoots to enter into the limelight, garner the public's attention, and shake up pop culture. At the start of her career, "gaga-ness" stood for sexualized entertainment with a horror or surreal twist, such as appearing on the cover of *Rolling Stone* in a g-string and leather machine gun bra, or artificially bleeding out while performing on stage. This sensationalized media image has been somewhat toned down as of 2014 and today Lady Gaga is widely seen as a unique, eccentric musical talent – a recognition cemented by her Super Bowl Halftime performance in 2017 and Academy Award win in 2018. The various manifestos she has published at different points in her career also allow for a changing perception of her persona.

In the early years of Lady Gaga's stardom, the manifesto was a rarely used form of sociopolitical and artistic expression.[9] In 2009, the year that saw the centennial of Filippo Tomaso Marinetti's *Futurist Manifesto*, art critics "seemed to be either declaring the manifesto dead or defensively acknowledging its 'pariah status'." [10] It is perhaps the very pariah status of the genre at the time that made Lady Gaga publish her first manifesto in an album booklet: *The Manifesto of Little Monsters* (2009) originated as a live speech performance addressed to her ardent fans she dubbed Little Monsters on her first tour, a name that has stuck ever since, fittingly called Monster Ball. Coming out of a highly trans-medial context, the text showcases a clear link between Lady Gaga's free interpretation of the manifesto as form and her performative acts of self-mystification, which would recur in her later manifestos. In 2011 she released a second, more widely distributed video manifesto called *The Manifesto of Mother Monster*, whose title refers to the name her fans had given her in return and which serves as an intro to her song *Born This Way*. In Jack Halberstam's own Gaga Manifesto – published as the last chapter of his book *Gaga Feminism* and expanded in the 2013 essay "Charming for the Revolution: A Gaga Manifesto" – Lady Gaga's *The Manifesto of Mother Monster* is described as "some weird sci-fi shit about choosing good over evil after emerging from an egg covered in goo!"[11] Halberstam also aligns it with *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and the *SCUM Manifesto* (1967), as well as Marinetti's manifesto (1909), emphasizing the striking science-fiction-inspired visuals as well as

8 See Cyndi Lauper: "The 2010 TIME 100", in: *Time.com*, https://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1984685_1984940_1984943,00.html (2010) and Daniel D'Addario: "Lady Gaga's Oscar Performance Could Redefine Her Career", in: *Time*, https://time.com/3718883/oscars-2015-lady-gaga-performance/ (February 23, 2015).

9 Reasons for this downturn of "socially progressive" manifestos after a previous boom during the 1960s and 1970s are manifold. One factor is the post-structural skepticism of stable subject positions required of and endorsed by the form, see Carsten Junker: "Innovation and Iteration: Queer Machines and the Tension between Manifesto and Manifestor", in: *Queer Reflections on AI: Uncertain Intelligences*, ed. by Michael Klipphahn-Karge, Ann-Kathrin Koster, Sara Morais Santos Bruss, London: Routledge (2023), pp. 145–61, p. 157.

10 Julian Hanna: *The Manifesto Handbook: 95 Theses on an Incendiary Form*, Ridgefield, CT: Zero Books (2019), p. 102.

11 Jack Halberstam: *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal*, Boston: Beacon Press (2012), p. 132.

the *weirdness* (or gaga-ness) of the manifesto and thereby also hinting at its camp potential.

The latest manifesto by Lady Gaga is *The Manifesto of Chromatica* (2020), which was released as a promotional video for her album *Chromatica* (2020) on the music-on-demand service Spotify. Here, contrary to her much more dramatic Mother Monster visual style, Lady Gaga is sitting on a floor in a neutral room and speaking to camera. But the manifestos are connected by a common thread that ties them all together: her mystification as an artistic persona. In *The Manifesto of Mother Monster* she presents herself as the cosmic mother of the world; in *The Manifesto of Chromatica* she stages herself as the originator of a philosophy of kindness. The form allows Lady Gaga to abstractly examine her artistic self-fashioning and process, the nature of fame, and her ethical responsibilities toward her fans. Nevertheless, there is still a degree of eccentricity and alienation in the *Manifesto of Chromatica* that also persists in Lady Gaga's public brand. As Halberstam argues, Lady Gaga's performances have critical potential within the pop culture mainstream, which, when taken seriously, can be used to imagine a feminist notion of anarchy. Halberstam understands this notion to be readily relatable, even granting a sense of self-empowerment, to those who experience structural marginalization due to their genders and sexualities. While this is not the place to discuss anarchy at length, it seems worthwhile to pause here for a moment to ponder Halberstam's abstract and rather tongue-in-cheek notion of anarchy:[12]

> [Lady Gaga] is in fact the last manifestation of a long line of feminine and queer performers who have used their time in the spotlight to produce funky forms of anarchy, to demonstrate an anti-sentimental fascination with loss, lack, darkness, and wild performance and to dig into the intersections of punk and glamour to find songs of madness and mayhem.[13]

Halberstam purposely forgoes an anarchist critique of the materialist-capitalist structures that objectify bodies such as Lady Gaga's and instead references anarchy as a symbolic resource of playful insurgence and rebellion, indicating a freedom from patriarchal conventions and a freedom to refuse these very conventions. Zeroing in on the figurative meanings of gaga performances and mobilizing references to anarchic rebellion as *discursive* strategy, Halberstam also circumvents an academic dispute often polarized into two competing positions: an exaggerated estimation of pop culture or a critique of the dynamics of its capitalist foundations, the latter reverberating with Frankfurt School-inflected concerns about culture-industrial mass appeal.[14] Let us move beyond this dichotomy here:

12 It would be worthwhile to discuss Halberstam's notion of Lady Gaga's anarchist performance aesthetics in relation to different historical strands of anarchy. One provocative question to ask when locating the cultural work of gaga-feminist anarchism would be, for instance, how to link it to the cultural logic of an authoritarian version of anarchy in the vein of Murray N. Rothbard's anarchocapitalism. See Jacob Jensen: "Repurposing Mises: Murray Rothbard and the Birth of Anarchocapitalism", in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 83/2 (2022), pp. 315–332, p. 315.

13 Halberstam: *Gaga Feminism* (2012), p. 139.

14 Taking Theodor W. Adorno's discussion of ethics in the Nazi era out of context, we

while the sociopolitical and economic conditions surrounding the production and circulation of Lady Gaga's manifestos should arguably be considered, and while a consideration of the pop star's presumably willful self-capitalization is plausible in light of anti-capitalist cultural critique, we take it as given that the Gaga Manifesto phenomenon, including its feminist agendas, is propelled by capitalist processes of extraction, which it also reproduces.

In light of complex dynamics of capitalist incorporation, we can home in further on the inherent subversive potential of Gaga's aesthetics. In his book, Halberstam acknowledges Lady Gaga as a brand, but also stresses that the singer's practice of "going gaga" indicates new foundations of feminism that exist independently of the actual person and the persona's commercial dimensions.[15] The meanings of "going gaga" have changed for Lady Gaga herself in the years since Halberstam published his book. Nonetheless, her enduring status as a pop icon continues to involve traces of eccentric and camp aesthetics, as, for example, in the stilted appeal of the *Manifesto of Chromatica* video. We read Lady Gaga's manifestos as performances that are expressive of her politics, in light of the fact that they are always already an expression of the capitalist implications of Lady Gaga's trademark, including the marketing strategy of an album or single release. Lady Gaga cannot and should not be located outside of capitalist dynamics that incorporate, contain, and strive on their critique.[16]

In sum, Halberstam neither advocates for an overthrow of the capitalist order nor willingly participates in the normalization of disruption as a mode of capitalist extraction. Instead, he focuses on how people experience the omnipresent power relations of capitalism. Accepting seeming contradictions, Halberstam suggests that we theorize gaga feminism as a movement that "leads the way to an anarchist project of cultural riot and reciprocation: [...] it is this gaga spirit of anarchy that I believe courses through Lady Gaga's music and forms the spine of a liberatory anthem."[17] To corroborate this, he draws parallels with other public personas who have questioned existing power relations from different standpoints and in various ways, among them Emma Goldman, Grace Jones, Shulamith Firestone, and Marina Abramović. Halberstam's interpretation of the Lady Gaga persona is applicable to *The Manifesto of Mother Monster* (2011) as well as to *The Manifesto of Chromatica* (2020): both share a high degree of theorizing gaga-ness as a point of departure. In comparison, *Chromatica* is more programmatically articulate in its argumentation for an open-minded, non-dogmatic philosophy, but still maintains a poetic and emotional style. While centered on the mythologized persona of Lady Gaga, the text directs attention to promoting what can be called a permissive principle of kindness: "[Chromatica is] neither right nor wrong nor is it greater or less

might polemically evoke his aphorism "Wrong Life Cannot Be Lived Rightly" here. See Theodor W. Adorno: *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. by Edmund F.N. Jephcott, London: Verso (2005 [1951]), p. 39.

15 Halberstam: *Gaga Feminism* (2012), p. xxv.

16 The assumption that capitalist processes incorporate critique can loosely be related to Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello's notion of *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, which resonates here. See Luc Boltanski, Ève Chiapello: *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Verso (2005 [1999]).

17 Halberstam: *Gaga Feminism* (2012), p. 137.

than any other perspective on life. No one thing is greater than another. Kindness rules all things. It simply is and it's mine. You can have it too, though."[18] The high level of self-reflection and abstraction in the manifesto, as well as the fact that this is her third manifesto published with an ever-expanding target audience in mind, elevates her latest use of the form to a meta-level of pop-cultural theorizing. In this manifesto, Lady Gaga expresses a philosophy which she sees as a valuable contribution to society, and theorizes her own performance to get at what the potential meanings of the Lady Gaga persona might be. While we may detect some faulty logic at play in this manifesto that self-undermines its own validity – e.g., does kindness rule all things and is it at the same time no "greater than another" thing? – we read the text as staging a performative contradiction, rather than seeking to resolve the complexities of its worldbuilding.

What does "going gaga" mean for the more recent, transformed artist Lady Gaga and how does the concept of gaga complicate narratives of mainstream feminism? In an interview in early 2020, Lady Gaga outlined her own responsibilities and ambitions as a celebrity: amid a general quest to destigmatize mental health issues, the artist is determined to share her own experiences and fund research that will contribute to the alleviation of today's mental health crisis. She proclaims that her goal is not only to entertain through her art, but to "help change [the audience's] life."[19] Yet another paradox emerges: the testimony is staged as authentic, but it is also a clearly dramatized performance given at an event sponsored by the weight loss industry, namely Weight Watchers. It would, again, make little sense to resolve any seeming contradictions here. The authority of the Lady Gaga persona is built on the validation of a willful *staging* of authentic personal experience. This can also be seen in *The Manifesto of Chromatica*, where references to personal experience authorize Lady Gaga's caretaking position.[20]

In this context, a specific notion of maternalism is crucial, i.e., a highly queer and camp notion that avoids approximating new normative horizons of motherhood for the emancipation of women. Lady Gaga features as the chosen Mother of the House, specifically the *Haus of Gaga* – a term that amalgamates fashion, design (Bauhaus), and queer culture. *Haus of Gaga* is her nickname for her creative team, as well as the brand name of her cosmetics line, which again displays the duality of art and capitalism inherent in the Gaga persona. While her 2011 and 2020 self-presentations are maternal in similarly mythologizing ways, the recent narrative of *The Manifesto of Chromatica* is more personal and less dramatic than Mother Monster. The concept of Chromatica is born as a starting point for changing the world, with Lady Gaga showing the way:

18 GagaMediaArchives: "Lady Gaga's Welcome to Chromatica Spotify Playlist Manifestos", in: *Youtube.com*, www . youtube . com / watch ? v = Hx90QBSHcLs (May 30, 2020), 00:02:47–00:03:08.

19 WeightWatchers: "Oprah's 2020 Vision Tour Visionaries: Lady Gaga Interview", in: *Youtube.com*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8iNYY7YV04 (January 9, 2020).

20 Lady Gaga's persona staged as an embodiment of caretaking and kindness could also be witnessed at the Oscar ceremony in 2022, when she presented the Best Picture category with Liza Minnelli, see Alex Meier: "Lady Gaga Helps Liza Minnelli Present Best Picture at 2022 Oscars, Whispers 'I Got You'", in: *abc7*, https://abc7.com/lady-gaga-liza-minnelli-2022-oscars-and/11687601/ (March 28, 2022).

> One reality I experienced was my Earth reality. The day-to-day painting of what I was taught was my natural state in life. At the time I also experienced a dream simultaneously and this dream was in combat with my earth reality at all times. A vision where I performed my thoughts for the world [...]. And in this world, I was kind and that kindness spread through people, through sound. This was the birth of Chromatica.[21]

The practice of self-mystification in the *Manifesto of Chromatica* is not only demonstrated through the theme of birthing, but it is also reinforced through a rhetoric that creates a narrative defying rational thinking, the narrative of a supposedly infinite temporality that conveys a sense of vast and expanding gaga worlds. In the metaphorical world of Chromatica, "time and linear structure don't matter, they don't exist" and the manifesto "is never-ending."[22] In the open time of this narrative, logic gets suspended to make room for two worlds that can exist concurrently. Earth and dream reality coexist, they become part of one and the same mythical manifesto world, a world in which narrow conventions and troubling hardships can be overcome. Historical realities get juxtaposed with the exploration of a "mythic present" in Lyon's sense.[23] In lieu of reason, the *Manifesto of Chromatica* is geared toward mythologizing Lady Gaga's philosophy. In this vein, Lady Gaga comes to embody an ideal characterized by kindness, weirdness, and self-reflective mythologizing. Stylizing the manifestor-persona of Lady Gaga as a chosen mother of the concept of Chromatica, the manifesto itself invites reflections on what Lady Gaga as an artist and public figure might represent.

LET US REVISIT...

... scholarship on the manifesto. As Lyon reminds us, manifestos from both artistic and political spheres are closely linked through their sense of urgency and shared revolutionary discourse. As a genre, the manifesto indicates and enables changing histories, generally marking a distinct before and after in time. The prototypical instance of this is Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto* (1848). While not the only text that shaped Marxist revolutionary discourse, it remains *the* reference text in the history of the form. The pamphlet owes its massive influence to its radical gesture toward impacting the world. In declarative ways, this manifesto proclaims its principles, writes its own version of history, insists that the world needs to change, as well as introducing "a new agent," the proletariat.[24] This performative power of the text was taken up by artists who made use of the potential of the genre to create new artistic movements and anticipate new forms of artistic expression. The influence of the *Communist Manifesto*, Martin

21 GagaMediaArchives: "Lady Gaga's Welcome" (2020), 00:00:59–00:01:38.

22 GagaMediaArchives: "Lady Gaga's Welcome" (2020), 00:01:59–00:02:05; 00:03:23–00:03:24.

23 Lyon: *Manifestoes* (1999), p. 59.

24 Martin Puchner: "Introduction", in: *The Manifesto in Literature – Volume 1: Origins of the Form, Pre-1900*, ed. by Thomas Riggs, Detroit: St. James Press (2013), p. xiv.

Puchner implies, did magic in the early twentieth-century cultural sphere. Now, manifestos brought art movements into being even before the art that would constitute that movement had been created, futurism being the prime example. It soon became more important for avant-garde artists to declare a movement or, at least, to identify with one, rather than to create art,[25] leading Puchner to credit manifestos with the discursive strength needed to bring about entire artistic movements. Avant-garde manifestos, in that sense, anticipated facts by virtue of their future-oriented rhetoric. And since they were launched in public at specific points in time, aiming to leave behind earlier movements, they themselves can also be positioned on a temporal vector.

Puchner pinpoints WWII as a historical turning point in the construction of manifesto time. Manifestos could no longer apply the rhetoric of newness in the same way as those of previous decades. Instead of declaring their own originality, manifestos had to join an established tradition of modernist manifestos.[26] Hence, while pre-World War II manifestos mobilized a cataphoric temporal orientation, post-World War II manifestos mobilized an anaphoric one. Thus, Puchner's narrative itself implies a serial sense of time.

Lady Gaga certainly plays with the edginess of artistic manifestos and, in taking up the form, inserts herself into a history of avant-gardism. In light of her position as a high-grossing artist, Lady Gaga's manifesto-writing can be interpreted as an appropriation of avant-garde art in a bid to increase her brand value. Nonetheless, like Halberstam, we interpret her pop-cultural work as art with impact and see epistemic *value* (pun intended) in her use of the form in which her politics and philosophy find expression. This reading is based on the fact that Gaga's manifestos do not project the serial sense of time that is so relevant in other avant-garde manifestos: they do not mobilize a sense of urgency for change through a narrative that stresses the inevitability of progress. Instead of projecting a strict dogmatism that leaves little room for an alternative present or other futurities, Lady Gaga adopts and re-fashions the form through a narrative temporality of openness. The motif of birthing in *The Manifesto of Mother Monster* is crucial in this respect: through the utopian setting suspended from any distinct place and time, birthing becomes a metaphor for an "eternal" creative act free of a serial-temporal trajectory. Notably, Lady Gaga also reverses the logical biographical sequence from the position of child to one of mother through her shift from mythic motherly creator to earthly child in the first lines of *Born This Way*: "My mama told me when I was young, 'We are all born superstars'."[27] While the lyrics, which also include religious slogans, may lend themselves to a critical reading of, again, a heteropatriarchal concept of motherhood, it has had an undeniable impact on the queer culture of its time: it invites queer readings of gaga kinship that upend normative notions of temporality.[28] For Halberstam, Lady Gaga's self-abstraction makes

25 Puchner: "Introduction" (2013), p. xvi.

26 Puchner: "Introduction" (2013), p. xvii.

27 "Lady Gaga – The Manifesto of Mother Monster", in: *genius.com*, https://genius.com/Lady-gaga-the-manifesto-of-mother-monster-lyrics (February 27, 2011).

28 For a retrospective on the album and its impact on queer culture, see Owen Myers's article on pitchfork.com, where he interestingly calls the songs on it "placard-ready manifestos."Owen

her a suitable emblem of an alternative feminism: "I build gaga feminism on the bedrock of the outrageous performance archive that Lady Gaga has created."[29] We add that temporal openness – which is also an openness to seemingly logical contradictions – qualifies her performative practices in this respect.

The suspension of linear time in Lady Gaga's art, her insistence on a utopian moment in the now, corresponds to the approach to feminism that Halberstam proposes. Rather than subscribing to a narrative of linear development toward progress, which involves shallow, stalling, and questionable promises of empowerment for disenfranchised groups in the future, Halberstam's gaga feminism focuses on the political imagination of marginalized communities and subjects who recognize and, in imaginatively embodied rebellion, transcend what the societal middle calls normal. As the title of the book already signals, Gaga feminism declares an "End of Normal" and refuses an agenda of clear objectives in favor of the open potentialities that its formalizations afford.[30] In its gaga-adaptations, the manifesto is the form that allows for this openness.

LET US PONDER...

... how Alice Yaeger Kaplan interprets the relation of manifestos and their theorization: Kaplan suggests that a theoretical engagement with pamphlets and manifestos impacts this engagement in such a way that theory itself becomes activist writing, the form "contaminates" theory.[31] This could be considered a contentious position articulated from a privileged position: conflating activist theory and praxis and therefore depreciating the risks of activists who put their lives on the line outside of the academic field. Furthermore, linking scholarly and non-scholarly activism may also downplay the epistemic value of, say, street protest. But theory on activist writing may very well shift from commenting on a textual archive of protest and activism to becoming part of that textual archive. Those who do the theoretical work on activist writers, therefore, cannot necessarily be easily distinguished from burgeoning activists themselves. This idea is corroborated by Galia Yanoshevsky in her essay "Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto," where she discusses the reciprocal relationship of the objects and the methods of manifesto research. She notes that theorists of the genre not only shape an understanding of its history and functions but are, in turn, also inspired, if not often impacted, by what they study: "Indeed, the declarative and revolutionary tone and style of manifestos [...] perhaps demands that the critic break with a standard, logical reading in studying the manifestos."[32] So what happens when theorists of a

Myers: "Lady Gaga: Born This Way the Tenth Anniversary", in: *pitchfork.com*, https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/lady-gaga-born-this-way-the-tenth-anniversary/ (July 2, 2021).

29 Halberstam: *Gaga Feminism* (2012), pp. 103–104.

30 Halberstam: *Gaga Feminism* (2012), p. 143.

31 Alice Yaeger Kaplan: "Recent Theoretical Work with Pamphlets and Manifestoes", in: *L'Esprit Créateur* 23/4 (1983), pp. 74–82, p. 75.

32 Galia Yanoshevsky: "Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre", in: *Poetics Today* 30/2 (June 1, 2009), pp. 257–286, pp. 275–276.

form that often combines arts and politics choose to use the manifesto themselves as their form of articulation?

What happens when Halberstam, reading Lady Gaga's art as an embodiment of feminist theorizing, writes a manifesto himself? The keywords of his theorizing – "failure," "wild," "punk," and "anarchy" – serve as red threads woven into a tight-knit artistic-political-activist discourse. By codifying his ideas about "wild theory," "wild methodology"„ and "a wild archive"[33] in manifesto form and thus mobilizing the nexus of arts and politics, Halberstam adds heft to his own theorizing.

Further, Halberstam's "Gaga Manifesto" is not merely *about* Lady Gaga's *Mother Monster Manifesto* and other manifestos. Halberstam uses the label of the genre to manifest an urgent call for a distinct kind of feminism, "to push us," as he notes, "further into the crisis, into the eye of the hurricane, deep into the heart of nonsense."[34] In so doing, he both references manifestos, commenting on their functions, and uses the form to push an agenda. In other words, Halberstam's own Gaga Manifesto can be understood as a *meta-manifesto*. A simple definition of meta-manifesto, as we understand it, is a manifesto about manifestos, a text that manifests possible meanings and practices of the manifesto itself. Mary Ann Caws also uses the term: "In its extreme case of self-definition, the manifesto consists of reflections on the manifesto itself: these become *meta-manifestos*."[35] To go further still: construing Halberstam's form of theorizing as a meta-manifesto points to meta-manifestors' deliberate attempts to draw attention to the urgency of their task and to position themselves in artistic, political, and academic fields. It raises questions about the overlapping of these fields, about willful modes of pushing or destabilizing boundaries between theory, art, and political activism. It knowingly gives theory a particular status of fierce – and possibly playful – determination. Reading Halberstam's manifesto as a meta-manifesto also highlights the fact that manifestos are located in a force field of tensions, not least between playful theory and politics. And it suggests overcoming the dominant historicizing narratives of the genre, with their serial sense of time, in favor of an approach detached from the logic of temporal progress. Instead of emplotting manifestos within a teleological historiography of activist writing, meta-manifestos call for reading various manifestos synchronously, also with respect to their plural and potentially contradictory agendas. This perspective does not exclude historical, economic, or social contextualization, rather it engages meta-manifestos in controversial debate and works out where their agendas potentially conflict and fail to line up, giving way to the mode of memory and remembering that Ahmed promotes in *Living a Feminist Life*: "offering new ways of understanding what we come up against."[36] This includes reflections on what the manifesto as a form, in general, can accomplish.

33 Jack Halberstam: "Charming for the Revolution: A Gaga Manifesto", in: *e-flux* 44, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/44/60142/charming-for-the-revolution-a-gaga-manifesto/ (April 2013), p. 7.

34 Halberstam: *Gaga Feminism* (2012), p. 132.

35 Mary Ann Caws: *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press (2001), p. xxix, original emphasis.

36 Ahmed: *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), p. 22.

If we define a *meta-manifesto* as a manifesto about manifestos, and if we also consider that, in Halberstam's sense, manifesto world-making promotes dogmatic openness, epistemic instability, playful anarchy, and experimentation – as much as it provokes critical responses – then we can also apply this term to Lady Gaga's own manifestos. Considering that Lady Gaga uses the form to experiment and expand the possibilities of the manifesto in formalizing her world-making, the texts become sites to reflect the potential of the manifesto as form. They can then also be considered, in their own respective iterations, to be meta-manifestos.

What is the temporality of Gaga meta-manifestos? And where can their constructions of time be positioned in time? Despite the temporal openness they postulate, despite their empty time and potential historical amnesia, despite their *nunc stans*, should they not be located in their own specific time, in the years of their respective publication (2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2020), and be related to the actual historical moments they reference? The temptation of these texts lies in the fact that they perform contradictions.[37] As Halberstam reflects: "Lady Gaga may be the name now for a site of global popularity and global investments in difference, but this name too will change and what is gaga today will be something else entirely tomorrow," before adding: "Let gaga feminism begin!"[38] Gaga meta-manifestos may endure and create counterpublics precisely because they are of the moment.

37 On Contradiction Studies, see Carsten Junker, Marie-Luise Löffler: "Ghostwriting and Its Contradictions, Or: Meet the Trumps", in: *Spaces of Dissension: Towards a New Perspective on Contradiction*, ed. by Julia Lossau, Daniel Schmidt-Brücken, Ingo H. Warnke, Wiesbaden: Springer (2019), pp. 39–66; Carsten Junker, Ingo Warnke: "Marguerite Stix and the Shell: Notes on Disciplinarity and Contradiction", in: *Quaderna* 3, https://quaderna.org/3/marguerite-stix-and-the-shell-notes-on-disciplinarity-and-contradiction/ (2015).

38 Halberstam: *Gaga Feminism* (2012), p. 149.

ANNEX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

Alinsky, Saul: *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, New York: Vintage Books (1989 [1971]).

Althusser, Louis: *Machiavelli and Us*, London: Verso (1999).

Barth, Niklas and Pierre-Héli Monot: "Negationen der Negationskontrolle: Eine Infrastrukturgeschichte polemogener Rede", in: *Medien der Infrastruktur*, ed. by Friedrich Balke, Bernhard Siegert, and Joseph Vogl, forthcoming.

Benjamin, Walter: "The Author as Producer [1934]", in: idem: *Understanding Brecht*, London: Verso (1998), pp. 85–103.

Goldmann, Lucien: *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the "Penseés" of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine*, London: Routledge (1964).

Lyon, Janet: "Transforming Manifestoes: A Second-Wave Problematic", in: *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 5/1 (1991), pp. 101–127.

Olson, Mancur: *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1965).

Tilly, Charles: *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, MA: Addison Wesley (1978).

ART, AUTONOMY, PHILOLOGY: RESEARCH PARAMETERS

Bollen, Johan, Alberto Pepe, and Huina Mao: "Modeling Public Mood and Emotion: Twitter Sentiment and Socio-Economic Phenomena", in: *Proceedings of the Fifth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, Palo Alto: AAAI Press (2009), pp. 450–453.

Brooks, Peter and Hilary Jewett (eds.): *The Humanities and Public Life*, New York: Fordham University Press (2014).

Eberly, Rosa A.: *Citizen Critics: Literary Public Spheres*, Urbana: University of Chicago Press (2000).

Forgacs, David: "Fascism, Violence and Modernity", in: *The Violent Muse: Violence and the Artistic Imagination in Europe, 1910–1939*, ed. by Jane Howlet and Rod Mengham, Manchester: Manchester University Press (1994), pp. 5–21.

Fox, Nicholas Hengen: *Reading as Collective Action: Text as Tactics*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press (2017).

Halasz, Alexandra: *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1997).

Hessel, Stéphane: *Indignez-vous!*, Montpellier: Indigène éditions (2010).

Jagoda, Patrick: *Network Aesthetics*, Chicago: University Press of Chicago (2016).

Jameson, Fredric: *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1981).

Kaczynski, Theodore J.: *Technological Slavery: The Collected Writings of Theodore J. Kaczynski, a.k.a. The Unabomber*, ed. by David Skrbina, Port Townsend: Feral House (2010), pp. 36–120.

Karpf, David: *Analytic Activism: Digital Listening and the New Political Strategy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2016).

Nahon, Karine and Jeff Hemsley: *Going Viral*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2013).

Özil, Mesut: "Meeting President Erdogan", in: *Twitter*, https : / / twitter . com / MesutOzil1088/status/1020984884431638528 (July 22, 2018).

Pollock, Sheldon: "Philology and Freedom", in: *Philological Encounters* 1 (2016), pp. 4–30.

Raymond, Joad: *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2003).

Winock, Michel: *Le siècle des intellectuels*, Paris: Seuil (1997).

POSTURES

Blanc, Olivier: *Olympe de Gouges*, Paris: Syros (1981).

Darnton, Robert: *The Devil in the Holy Water, or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press (2010).

Darnton, Robert: "The High Enlightenment and the Low-Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France", in: *Past & Present* 51/1 (1971), pp. 81–115.

Ferret, Olivier: *La fureur de nuire: échanges pamphlétaires entre philosophes et antiphilosophes (1750–1770)*, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation (2007).

Foucault, Michel: *Fearless Speech*, ed. by Joseph Pearson, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) (2001).

Foucault, Michel: *Le courage de la vérité: Le gouvernement de soi et des autres II: Cours au Collège de France, 1984*, Paris: Hautes Études (2009).

Foucault, Michel: *Le gouvernement de soi et des autres: Cours au Collège de France, 1982–1983*, Paris: Hautes Études (2008).

Gouges, Olympe de: *Écrits politiques*, ed. by Olivier Blanc, Paris: Côté femmes (1993).

Gouges, Olympe de: *Les droits de la femme*, [Paris] (1791).

Gouges, Olympe de: *Testament politique d'Olympe de Gouges*, Paris (1793).

Griffin, Dustin H.: *Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century*, Newark: University of Delaware Press (2013).

Griffin, Robert J.: "Anonymity and Authorship", in: *New Literary History* 30 (1999), pp. 877–895.

Hilker, Annette: *Karnavalisierung als Medium der Aufklärung: Fontenelle, Fénelon, Voltaire, Diderot*, Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag (2006).

Jouhaud, Christian: "Les libelles en France au XVIIe siècle: action et publication", in: *Cahiers d'histoire* 90–91 (2003), pp. 33–45.

Jouhaud, Christian: *Mazarinades: la Fronde des mots*, Paris: Aubier (1985).

Larkin, Edward: *Thomas Paine and the Literature of Revolution*, New York: Cambridge University Press (2005).

Lilti, Antoine: *L'héritage des Lumières: ambivalences de la modernité*, Paris: Hautes Études (2019).

Lilti, Antoine: *Le monde des salons: sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Fayard (2005).

Lilti, Antoine: "Reconnaissance et célébrité: Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la politique du nom propre", in: *Orages: Littérature et culture* 9 (2010), pp. 77–94.

Meizoz, Jérôme: *Postures littéraires: mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Geneva: Slatkine (2007).

Pabst, Stefan: "Anonymität und Autorschaft: Ein Problemaufriss", in: idem: *Anonymität und Autorschaft: Zur Literatur- und Rechtsgeschichte der Namenlosigkeit*, Berlin: De Gruyter (2011), pp. 1–34.

Paine, Thomas: *Collected Writings*, ed. by Eric Foner, New York: Library of America (1995).

Paine, Thomas: *Two Letters to Lord Onslow: Lord Lieutenant of the County of Surry: and One to Mr. Henry Dundas, Secretary of State, on the Subject of the Late Excellent Proclamation*, London: James Ridgway (1792).

Questions sur l'Encyclopédie, par des amateurs, vol. II, s.l. (1770).

Raymond, Joad: *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2003).

Serres, Michel: *Le Parasite*, Paris: Grasset (1980).

Shea, Louisa: *The Cynic Enlightenment: Diogenes in the Salon*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (2010).

Strauss, Leo: *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1952).

Tableau de Paris, vol. XI, Amsterdam (1788).

Taylor, A.J.P. and Reginald Reynolds (eds.): *British Pamphleteers, Vol. 2: From the French Revolution to the Nineteen-Thirties*, London: Allan Wingate (1951).

Treacher, Claudia: "Orwell's Political Pamphlet 'Solar System': A Network Interpretation of a British Library Collection", in: *Electronic British Library Journal* (2022).

Turnovsky, Geoffrey: *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press (2010).

Warner, Michael: *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1990).

SHORT-CIRCUITING PUBLICITY

Abramson, Jill: "'Alternative Facts' Are Just Lies, Whatever Kellyanne Conway Claims", in: *The Guardian*, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/23/kellyanne-conway-alternative-facts-lies (January 24, 2017).

Boltanski, Luc: *Rätsel und Komplotte: Kriminalliteratur, Paranoia, moderne Gesellschaft*, Berlin: Suhrkamp (2013).

Boltanski, Luc: *Soziologie und Sozialkritik: Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen 2008*, Berlin: Suhrkamp (2010).

Borgesius, Frederik Zuiderveen, Damian Trilling, Judith Moeller, Balázs Bodó, Claes H. Vreese, and Natali Helberger: "Should We Worry About Filter Bubbles?", in: *Internet Policy Review: Journal on Internet Regulation* 5/1, https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2758126 (2016).

Bourdieu, Pierre: *Meditationen: Zur Kritik der scholastischen Vernunft*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (2001).

Brandom, Robert B.: *A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (2019).

Habermas, Jürgen: "Überlegungen und Hypothesen zu einem erneuten Strukturwandel der politischen Öffentlichkeit", in: *Ein neuer Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit?*, ed. by Martin Seeliger and Sebastian Sevignani, Baden-Baden: Nomos (2021), pp. 470–500.

Kumkar, Nils C.: *Alternative Fakten: Zur Praxis der kommunikativen Erkenntnisverweigerung*, Berlin: Suhrkamp (2022).

Latour, Bruno: "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern", in: *Critical Inquiry* 2/30 (2004), pp. 225–248.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: "Manifest der kommunistischen Partei", in: *MEW (Marx-Engels-Werke)*, vol. 4, Berlin: Dietz (1960 [1848]), pp. 459–493.

Nuzzi, Olivia: "Kellyanne Conway Is a Star", in: *New York Magazine*, www.nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/03/kellyanne-conway-trumps-first-lady.html (March 18, 2017).

Schaffner, Brian F. and Samantha Luks: "Misinformation or Expressive Responding? What an Inauguration Crowd Can Tell Us about the Source of Political Misinformation in Surveys", in: *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82/1 (2018), pp. 135–147.

Sinderbrand, Rebecca: "How Kellyanne Conway Ushered in the Era of 'Alternative Facts'", in: *Washington Post*, www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/01/22/how-kellyanne-conway-ushered-in-the-era-of-alternative-facts/ (January 22, 2017).

The Invisible Committee: *Now*, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) (2017).

Thompson, Stuart A., Karen Yourish, and Jeremy W. Peters: "What Fox News Hosts Said Privately vs. Publicly About Voter Fraud", in: *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/02/25/business/media/fox-news-dominion-tucker-carlson.html (February 25, 2023).

"Transcript of White House Press Secretary Statement to the Media", in: *Politico (blog)*, www.politico.com/story/2017/01/transcript-press-secretary-sean-spicer-media-233979 (January 21, 2017).

Vrieze, Jop: "Bruno Latour, a Veteran of the 'Science Wars,' Has a New Mission", in: *Science*, www.science.org/content/article/bruno-latour-veteran-science-wars-has-new-mission (October 10, 2017).

CIRCULATIONS

Ahmed, Sarah: *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (2004).

Bruns, Axel: *Are Filter Bubbles Real*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2019).

Clark, Jessica and Tracy Slyke: *Beyond the Echo Chamber: Reshaping Politics Through Networked Progressive Media*, New York: The New Press (2010).

Elden, Stuart: *The Birth of Territory*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2013).

"Free movement – EU nationals", in: *European Commission*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=457.

Goodwin, Jeff, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Poletta: "Why Emotions Matter", in: *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, ed. by Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Poletta, Chicago: Chicago University Press (2001), pp. 1–26.

Hunter, Matt: "David Cameron 'lives in too much luxury' to care about mass migration: Eurosceptic Priti Patel says Remain leaders are too rich to care about real people's concerns", in: *The Daily Mail*, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3614567/Torys-Brexit-civil-war-escalates-Leave-campaigners-target-PM.html (May 29, 2016).

Maier, Charles: *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*, Cambridge: Harvard University (2016).

Massumi, Brian: *Politics of Affect*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2015).

Mouffe, Chantal: *The Democratic Paradox*, London: Verso (2000).

Orwell, George: "Introduction", in: *British Pamphleteers, Vol. 1: From the Sixteenth Century to the French Revolution*, ed. by George Orwell and Reginald Reynolds, London: Wingate (1948), pp. 7–18.

"Pamphlet", in: *Oxford English Dictionary*, www.oed.com/dictionary/pamphlet_n.

Rambukkana, Nathan (ed.): *Hashtag Publics: The Power and Politics of Discursive Networks*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing (2015).

"Results and turnout at the EU referendum", in: *The Electoral Commission*, www.electoralcommission.org.uk/research-reports-and-data/our-reports-and-data-past-elections-and-referendums/results-and-turnout-eu-referendum (2024).

Ross, Tim: "David Cameron and George Osborne too Rich to Care about Migration", in: *The Telegraph*, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/28/david-cameron-and-george-osborne-too-rich-to-care-about-migratio (May 29, 2016).

Sack, Robert: *Human Territoriality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1986).

Stewart, Heather and Rowena Mason: "Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster reported to police", in: *The Guardian*, www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/16/nigel-farage-defends-ukip-breaking-point-poster-queue-of-migrants (June 16, 2016).

Storey, David: *Territories: The Claiming of Space*, Oxon: Routledge (2001).

Vaccari, Cristian and Augusto Valeriani: *Outside the Bubble: Social Media and Political Participation in Western Democracies*, New York: Oxford University Press (2021).

White, Anne: "Unsettling times for a settled population? Polish perspectives on Brexit", in: *UCL European Institute*, www.ucl.ac.uk/european-institute/news/2016/apr/unsettling-times-settled-population-polish-perspectives-brexit (April 14, 2016).

Arendt, Hannah: *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1992).

Barth, Niklas and Pierre-Héli Monot: "Negationen der Negationskontrolle: Eine Infrastrukturgeschichte polemogener Rede", in: *Medien der Infrastruktur*, ed. by Friedrich Balke, Bernhard Siegert, and Joseph Vogl, forthcoming.

Barthes, Roland: "The Adjective is the 'Statement' of Desire", in: idem: *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962–1980*, Berkeley: University of California Press (1991), pp. 172–176.

Bebnowski, David: "Mit Druckerzeugnissen Druck erzeugen: Flugschriften als Quellen für die Intellectual History der Neuen Linken als Konfliktgeschichte", in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 48/1 (2023), pp. 163–194.

Bellenger, Yvonne: "Le pamphlet avant le pamphlet: le mot et la chose", in: *Cahiers de l'Association International des Études Françaises* 36 (1984), pp. 87–96.

Binoche, Bertrand: *Écrasez l'infâme! Philosopher à l'âge des Lumières*, Paris: La fabrique éditions (2018).

Boehm, Omri: *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2014).

Bréville, Benoît: "Pétitionnaires de tous les pays", in: *Le Monde diplomatique* (August 2020), p. 28.

Castoriadis, Cornelius: "Institution of Society and Religions", in: idem: *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, trans. by David Ames Curtis, Stanford: Stanford University Press (1997), pp. 311–330.

Collini, Stefan: *The Nostalgic Imagination: History in English Criticism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2019).

Darnton, Robert: *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press (2010).

Deseriis, Marco: "On the Symbolic Power of Shared Pseudonyms", in: *Seachange* 6/1 (2015), pp. 51–62.

Früchtl, Josef: "Sensus and Dissensus Communis: The Comedy of Democracy (Following Cavell)", in: *Aesthetic Investigations* 4/1 (2020), pp. 96–111.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg: *Truth and Method*, London: Bloomsbury (2004).

Graef, Ortwin: "'Sweet Dreams, Monstered Nothings': Catachresis in Kant and Coriolanus", in: *The Ethics in Literature*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield, Dominic Rainsford, and Tim Woods, Basingstoke: Macmillan (1999), pp. 233–236.

Hall, Stuart: "Introduction", in: *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. by Stuart Hall, London: Sage Publications (1997), pp. 1–12.

Hastings, Michel, Cédric Passard, and Juliette Rennes: "Les mutations du pamphlet dans la France contemporaine", in: *Mots: Les langages du politique* 91 (2009), pp. 5–17.

Hesse, Carla: "Economic Upheavals in Publishing", in: *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775–1800*, ed. by Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, Berkeley: University of California Press (1989), pp. 69–97.

Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Judgement*, ed. by Nicholas Walker, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2007).

Kelty, Christopher: "Geeks, Social Imaginaries, and Recursive Publics", in: *Cultural Anthropology* 20/2 (2005), pp. 185–214.

Lacan, Jacques: "Kant with Sade", in: *October* 51 (1989), pp. 55–75.

Lewis, David: *Convention: A Philosophical Study*, Oxford: Blackwell (2002).

Lyotard, Jean-François: "Sensus Communis", in: *Paragraph* 11/1 (1988), pp. 1–23.

Morgan, Diane: *Kant Trouble: Obscurities of the Enlightenment*, London: Routledge (2000).

Nahon, Karine and Jeff Hemsley: *Going Viral*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2013).

Olson, Mancur: *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2002).

Paine, Thomas: "Common Sense", in: *Common Sense and Other Writings*, ed. by Jason M. Opal, New York: Norton (2012 [1775–1776]).

Pettegree, Andrew: *Brand Luther: 1517, Printing, and the Making of the Reformation*, New York: Penguin (2016).

Potter, Pitman B. and Sophia Woodman: "Boundaries of Tolerance: Charter 08 and Debates over Political Reform", in: *Liu Xiaobo, Charter 08, and the Challenges of Political Reform in China*, ed. by Jean-Philippe Béja, Fu Hualing, and Eva Pils, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press (2012), pp. 97–118.

Reckwitz, Andreas: *Das hybride Subjekt: Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp (2020).

Sade, Marquis de: "Philosophy in the Bedroom", in: *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*, New York: Grove Press (1965 [1795]).

Schiffer, Stephen: *Meaning*, Oxford: Clarendon Press (1972).

Scott, James C.: *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven: Yale University Press (1990).

Scott, James C.: *Seeing Like a State: How*

Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed, New Haven: Yale University Press (1998).

Thoburn, Nicholas: "Communist Objects and the Values of Printed Matter", in: *Social Text* 28/2 (2010), pp. 1–30.

Warner, Michael: *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York: Zone Books (2002).

Whiteley, Gillian: "The Allure of Pamphilos: The Radical Art of Pamphleteering", in: *Art, Politics, and The Pamphleteer*, ed. by Jane Tormey and Gillian Whiteley, London: Bloomsbury Academic (2021), pp. 5–28.

REPRODUCING FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Benjamin, Walter: "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility [1936]", in: *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch, New York: W. W. Norton & Company (2018), pp. 976–996.

Blassingame, John W.: "Introduction to Series One", in: *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One, Volume 1*, ed. by John W. Blassingame, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (1979).

Blight, David W.: *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*, New York: Simon & Schuster (2018).

Breitenwischer, Dustin: "Creative Democracy and Aesthetic Freedom: Notes on John Dewey and Frederick Douglass", in: *REAL* 34 (2018), pp. 47–63.

Derrida, Jacques: *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press (1997 [1967]).

Douglass, Frederick: "Great is the Miracle of Human Speech: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., On 31 August 1891", in: *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One, Volume 5*, ed. by John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (1992), pp. 474–477.

Douglass, Frederick: *Lessons of the Hour*, Baltimore: Thomas & Evans (1894).

Douglass, Frederick: "Letter from the Editor", in: *The North Star* (November 23, 1849), p. 2.

Douglass, Frederick: "Letter to Louis Prang [1870]", in: *The Chromolithographs of Louis Prang*, ed. by Katherine M. McClinton, New York: Potter (1973), p. 37.

Douglass, Frederick: "My Bondage and My Freedom [1855]", in: *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr., New York: Library of America (1994), pp. 103–452.

Douglass, Frederick: "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written By Himself [1845]", in: *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr., New York: Library of America (1994), pp. 1–102.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika: *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, London and New York: Routledge (2008).

In Memoriam: Frederick Douglass, Philadelphia: John C. Yorston & Co (1897).

Newman, Peter, Patrick Rael, and Philip Lapsansky: "Introduction: The Theme of Our Contemplation", in: *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African-American Protest Literature, 1790–1860*, ed. by Peter Newman, Patrick Rael, and Philip Lapsansky, New York: Routledge (2001), pp. 1–31.

Preston, Dickson J.: *Young Frederick Douglass*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (2018 [1980]).

Raymond, Joad: *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2003).

Stauffer, John: "Frederick Douglass, Photography, and Imagination", in: *Traveling Traditions: Nineteenth-Century Cultural Concepts and Transatlantic Intellectual Networks*, ed. by Erik Redling, Berlin: De Gruyter (2016), pp. 113–138.

Stauffer, John: *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2004).

Stauffer, John, Zoe Trodd, and Celeste-Marie Bernier (eds.): *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century's Most Photographed American*, New York: Liveright (2018).

"Story Behind the Number: Literacy and Lynchings", in: *NPR – All Things Considered*, https://www.npr.org/2006/02/04/5189912/story-behind-the-number-literacy-and-lynchings (February 4, 2006).

Wallace, Maurice O. and Shawn Michelle Smith (eds.): *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African-American Identity*, Durham: Duke University Press (2012).

Warner, Michael: *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York: Zone Books (2005).

Wells-Barnett, Ida B.: "Letter to Frederick Douglass, Frederick Douglass Papers: General Correspondence, 1841–1912; 1894, June–July", in: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mss1187900123/.

Willcox, Walter F.: "The Negro Population", in: *Negroes in the United States*, ed. by S.N.D. North, Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census (1904) (= Bulletin 8), pp. 11–99.

Andréas, Bert: *Le manifeste communiste de Marx et Engels: histoire et bibliographie 1848–1918*, Milan: Feltrinelli (1963).

Baker, Mona: "Framing Narratives in Translation", in: idem: *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account*, London: Routledge (2006), pp. 105–140.

Bassnett, Susan: "Translators in Search of Originals", in: *Benjamins Translation Library*, ed. by Cecilia Alvstad, Annjo K. Greenall, Hanne Jansen, and Kristiina Taivalkoski-Shilov, Amsterdam: John Benjamins (2017), pp. 119–129.

Black, David: *Helen Macfarlane: A Feminist, Revolutionary Journalist, and Philosopher in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England*, Lanham: Lexington Books (2004).

Black, David (ed.): *Helen Macfarlane: Red Republican – The Complete Annotated Writings*, London: Unkant (2014).

Delistathi, Christina: "'He stole our translation': Translation Reviews and the Construction of Marxist Discourse", in: *Target* 2/29 (2017), pp. 201–221.

Delistathi, Christina: "Translation as a Means of Ideological Struggle", in: *Translation and Opposition*, ed. by Dimitris Asimakoulas and Margaret Rogers, Bristol; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters (2011), pp. 204–222.

Draper, Hal: *The Adventures of the Communist Manifesto*, Berkeley: Center for Socialist History (1994 [1984]).

Engels, Friedrich: "Letter from Engels to Friedrich Adolph Sorge in Hoboken, 17.3.1872", in: *MEW (Marx-Engels-Werke)*, vol. 33, Berlin: Dietz (1976), pp. 432–433.

Engels, Friedrich: "Preface to the English Edition of 1888", in: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, ed. by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Moscow: Progress Publishers (1977).

Engels, Friedrich: "Preface to the Polish Edition of 1892", in: *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Moscow: Progress Publishers (1977).

Goyens, Tom: *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880–1914*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press (2007).

Harney, George Julian: "Editorial introduction to Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: German Communism: Manifesto of the German Communist Party (Published in February 1848)", in: *Red Republican* (November 1850).

Hermans, Theo: *The Conference of the Tongues*, Manchester: St. Jerome (2007).

Konca, İrem: "The Turkish Retranslations of Marx's *Das Kapital* as a Site of Intellectual and Ideological Struggle", in: *Studies from a Retranslation Culture*, ed. by Özlem Berk Albachten and Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar, Singapore: Springer (2019), pp. 81–93.

Kremmel, Stefanie: *Der Lebenslauf der Übersetzung: Die Transkulturalität des Kommunistischen Manifests*, Vienna: University of Vienna (2022).

Manifesto of the Communists: Published by the International Workingmen's Association, New York: Schaerr & Frantz (1883).

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: "German Communism – Manifesto of the German Communist Party", in: *Woodhull And Claflin's Weekly* (December 30, 1871), p. 3.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: "German Communism: Manifesto of the German Communist Party (Published in February 1848)", trans. by Helen Macfarlane, in: *Red Republican* (November 1850), published in four installments.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, Berlin: Dietz (1965 [1848]).

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: "Manifeste de Karl Marx", in: *Le Socialiste* (1872), published in nine installments (20.1., 27.1., 10.2., 17.2., 24.2., 2.3., 9.3., 16.3., 30.3.)

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: "Manifesto comunista", in: *O Pensamento Social* (1873).

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, trans. by Samuel Moore, Moscow: Progress Publishers (1977 [1888]).

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: "Manifiesto Comunista de 1848, procedido de un prologo de sus autores", trans. by José Mesa and Leompart], in: *La Emancipación* 72–77 (1872), published in six installment (2.11., 9.11., 16.11., 23.11., 30.11., 7.12.), pp. 3–4.

Puchner, Martin: *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (2006).

Richter, Julia: *Translationshistoriographie: Perspektiven und Methoden*, Berlin: Frank & Timme (2023).

Schippel, Larisa: "Between Consensus and the Dissolution of Boundaries: On the Transculturality of Communicative Action", in: *Chronotopos – A Journal of Translation History* 1–2 (2020), pp. 237–251.

Struik, Dirk J. (ed.): *Birth of the Communist Manifesto: With Full Text of the Manifesto, all Prefaces by Marx and Engels, Early Drafts by Engels and other Supplementary Material*, New York: International Publishers (1971).

Walkowitz, Rebecca L.: *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, New York: Columbia University Press (2015).

PRESSING SOCIAL ORDERS

Asen, Robert: "Seeking the 'Counter' in Counterpublics", in: *Communication Theory* 10/4 (2000), pp. 424–446.

Bailyn, Bernard: *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Vol. I (1750–1765*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap (1965).

Bebnowski, David: "Mit Druckerzeugnissen Druck erzeugen: Flugschriften als Quellen für die Intellectual History der Neuen Linken als Konfliktgeschichte", in: *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 48/1 (2023), pp. 163–194.

Bellingradt, Daniel: *Flugpublizistik und Öffentlichkeit um 1700: Dynamiken, Akteure und Strukturen im urbanen Raum des Alten Reiches*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (2011).

Boltanski, Luc: *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2011).

Bruun, Mette Birkedal: "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé", in: *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, ed. by Michaël Green, Lars Cyril Nørgaard, and Mette Birkedal Bruun, Leiden: Brill (2021), pp. 12–60.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers: Miscellany, 1840-1946; Scrapbooks; #1, 2 of 4, mss41210, box 9, prepared by Susan B. Anthony, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4121001 54.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers: Miscellany, 1840-1946; Scrapbooks; On the Woman's Rights Convention [1848], mss41210, box 9, prepared by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/mss4121001 52.

Felski, Rita: *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1989).

Ferree, Myra Marx: *Feminismen: Die deutsche Frauenbewegung in globaler Perspektive*, Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung (2019).

Fraser, Nancy: "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", in: *Social Text* 25/26 (1990), pp. 56–80.

Freedman, Estelle B.: *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, New York: Ballantine Books (2003).

Gerhard, Ute: *Frauenbewegung und Feminismus: Eine Geschichte seit 1789*, Munich: C.H. Beck (2020).

Ginzberg, Lori D.: *Untidy Origins: A Story of Women's Rights in Antebellum*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2005).

Hanna, Julian: *The Manifesto Handbook: 95 Theses on an Incendiary Form*, Alresford, Hampshire: Zero Books (2020).

Klaus, Elisabeth and Ricarda Drüeke (eds.): *Öffentlichkeiten und gesellschaftliche Aushandlungsprozesse: Theoretische Perspektiven und empirische Befunde*, Berlin: De Gruyter (2017).

Martin, Waldo E.: *The Mind of Frederick Douglass*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (1984).

Monot, Pierre-Héli: "Émile Zola: 'J'Accuse...!': A Commented Bilingual Edition, Including Contextual Sources and a Facsimile Copy of Émile Zola's Manuscript (Version 1.0)", in: idem: *The Arts of Autonomy: A Living Anthology of Polemical Literature*, vol. 1, Munich (2022).

Monot, Pierre-Héli: "The Book of Mozi: Chapter 39. 'Against the Confucians'", in: idem: *The Arts of Autonomy: A Living Anthology of Polemical Literature*, vol. 8, Munich (2023).

Orwell, George and Reginald Reynolds (eds.): *British Pamphleteers, Vol. 1: From the Sixteenth Century to the French Revolution*, London: Allan Wingate (1948).

Otto-Peters, Louise: "Adresse eines Mädchens, an den hochverehrten Herrn Minister-Oberländer [1848]", in: *Frauenemanzipation im deutschen Vormärz: Texte und Dokumente*, ed. by Renate Möhrmann, Stuttgart: Reclam (1978), pp. 199–202.

Otto-Peters, Louise: "Selbsterlebtes: Skizzen aus Haus und Welt [1880-1890]", in: *Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv*, Digitalisat 7, https://www.digitales-deutsches-frauenarchiv.de.

Peacey, Jason: *Politicians and Pamphleteers*, London, New York: Routledge (2016).

Rancière, Jacques: *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1999).

Roberts, Timothy Mason: *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press (2009).

Schlögl, Rudolf: *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit*, Paderborn: Konstanz University Press (2014).

Schottenloher, Karl: *Flugblatt und Zeitung: Von den Anfängen bis zum Jahre 1848*, Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann (1985 [1922]).

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady: "Declaration of Sentiments [1848]", in: *National Park Service / The First Women's Rights Convention*, https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/declaration-of-sentiments.htm.

Taylor, Charles: *Philosophical Arguments*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1995).

Tetrault, Lisa: *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848–1898*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2014).

Warner, Michael: *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York: Zone Books (2002).

Warner, Michael: *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1990).

Wellman, Judith: *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press (2004).

MATERIAL FOR AGITATION

Bebnowski, David: "Die Umkodierung des Proletariats: Druckerzeugnisse im Kampf der NSDAP um die Arbeiterschaft", in: *Kleinformate im Umbruch: Mobile Medien für Widerstand und Kooperation (1918–1933)*, ed. by Caroline Adler, Maddalena Casarini, and Daphne Weber, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter (2023), pp. 37–58.

Brauneck, Manfred: *Die Rote Fahne: Kritik, Theorie, Feuilleton 1918–1933*, München: Wilhelm Fink (1973).

Central Committee of the KPD: *Gegen Young-Plan, Massenelend und Faschismus: Für ein freies, sozialistisches Deutschland (Richtlinien für den Wahlkampf 1930)*, Berlin (1930) (= *Instruktionen für die Wahlarbeit* 1).

Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke für die Arbeit der Agitpropfunktionäre in den Wahlkämpfen 1928*, Berlin (1928) (= *Für die Wahlarbeit! Material* 3).

Central Committee of the KPD: *Richtlinien für die Wahlkämpfe 1928*, Berlin (1928).

Central Committee of the KPD: *Sonderanweisungen für die Wahlkämpfe 1928*, Berlin (1928) (= *Für die Wahlarbeit! Material* 2).

"Der Marsch der 20 000 roten Sportler", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 3, 1930), p. 2.

Friedrich, Gerhard: *Proletarische Literatur und politische Organisation: Die Literaturpolitik der KPD in der Weimarer Republik und die proletarisch-revolutionäre Literatur*, Frankfurt am Main: Lang (1981).

Hoffmann, Ludwig and Daniel Hoffmann-Ostwald: *Deutsches Arbeitertheater 1918–1933*, Berlin: Henschelverl. Kunst und Gesellschaft (1972).

Kinner, Klaus: *Der deutsche Kommunismus: Selbstverständnis und Realität*, vol. 1, Berlin: Dietz (2012).

LaPorte, Norman: "The Rise of Ernst Thälmann and the Hamburg Left, 1921–1923", in: *Weimar Communism as Mass Movement 1918–1933*, ed. by Ralf Hoffrogge and Norman LaPorte, London: Lawrence and Wishart (2017), pp. 129–149.

Lau, Dirk: *Wahlkämpfe der Weimarer Republik: Propaganda und Programme der politischen Parteien bei den Wahlen zum Deutschen Reichstag von 1924 bis 1930*, Baden-Baden: Tectum (2018).

McNeill, William H.: *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1995).

Mergel, Thomas: *Propaganda nach Hitler: Eine Kulturgeschichte des Wahlkampfs in der Bundesrepublik 1949–1990*, Göttingen: Wallstein (2010).

"Parole", in: *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, vol. VII, Leipzig: Hirzel (1889).

Püschel, Almuth: "Die Arbeit der KPD mit dem Film und mit Filmkünstlern während der Weimarer Republik", in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 27/4 (1985), pp. 510–517.

"Riesenbeteiligung im ganzen Reiche", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 3, 1930), p. 2.

Schuster, Kurt G.P.: *Der Rote Frontkämpferbund 1924–1929*, Düsseldorf: Droste (1975).

Schütze, Christian Vasili: *Die Subversion verletzender Worte: Grundlagen einer Politik des Performativen*, Frankfurt/New York: Campus (2022).

"Slogan", in: *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, https://www.dwds.de/wb/Slogan.

Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin, https://www.bundesarchiv.de.

Weber, Hermann: *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus: Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt (1969).

Whiteley, Gillian: "The Allure of Pamphilos: The Radical Art of Pamphleteering", in: *Art, Politics, and The Pamphleteer*, ed. by Jane Tormey and Gillian Whiteley, London: Bloomsbury Academic (2021), pp. 5–28.

Winkler, Heinrich August: *Der Schein der Normalität: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik 1924 bis 1930*, Berlin/Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz (1985).

"Zum 1. Mai", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 1, 1920), pp. 1–2.

MASS VIOLENCE IN PAMPHLETS

Alexander, Jeffrey C.: "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma", in: idem: *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press (2004), pp. 1–30.

Awan, Akil N.: "Weaponising the Crusades: Justifying Terrorism and Political

Violence", in: *Engaging the Crusades Vol. 2: The Crusades in the Modern World*, ed. by Mike Horswell and Akil N. Awan, London: Routledge (2020), pp. 4–24.

Benjamin, Walter: "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (Dritte Fassung)", in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (1974), pp. 471–508.

Benjamin, Walter: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (Third Version)", in: *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 4, 1938–1940*, ed. by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2003), pp. 251–283.

Brock, Lothar and Hendrik Simon: "Justifications of the Use of Force as Constitutive Elements of World Order – Points of Departure, Arrivals, and Moving Destinations", in: *The Justification of War and International Order: From Past to Present*, ed. by Lothar Brock and Hendrik Simon, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2021), pp. 503–524.

Bush, George W.: "Address upon Arrival [from Camp David], White House South Lawn", in: *C-Span*, https://www.c-span.org/video/?166087-1/terrorist-attacks-us (September 16, 2001).

DiveEntertainment47: "Jana aus Kassel fängt an zu weinen als der Ordner aus Hannover sie wegen ihrer Rede konfrontiert", in: *Youtube.com*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJzloVidwVQ (November 21, 2020).

Erll, Astrid: "Remembering across Time, Space, and Cultures: Premediation, Remediation and the 'Indian Mutiny'", in: *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, Berlin: de Gruyter (2009), pp. 109–138.

Gerlach, Christian: *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2010).

Gröppmaier, Sakina Shakil: "Why Political Pamphlets Still Matter", in: *Public Seminar*, https://publicseminar.org/essays/why-political-pamphlets-still-matter/ (October 12, 2022).

"Human losses during the NATO bombing", in: *Humanitarian Law Centre*, http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=19413 (March 23, 2012).

Maynard, Jonathan Leader: *Ideology and Mass Killing: The Radicalized Security Politics of Genocides and Deadly Atrocities*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2022).

Moses, A. Dirk: *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2021).

"Pamphlet", in: *Oxford English Dictionary*, www.oed.com/dictionary/pamphlet_n.

Prade-Weiss, Juliane: "Staging Enmity: Reading Populist Productions of Shame with Jelinek's *On the Royal Road*", in: *Open Research Europe* 3/23, 10.12688/openreseurope.15469.2 (2023).

Putin, Vladimir: "Обращение Президента Российской Федерации [Address by the President of the Russian Federation]", in: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843 (February 24, 2022).

Putin, Vladimir: "Обращение Президента Российской Федерации [Address by the President of the Russian Federation]", in: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828 (February 21, 2022).

"Reflections on the Final Crusade", in: *Dabiq* 4 (2014), pp. 32–44.

Schwab, Gabriele: *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*, New York: Columbia University Press (2010).

Schwartz, Matthias, Nina Weller, and Heike Winkel: "After Memory: Introduction", in: *After Memory: World War II in Contemporary Eastern European Literatures*, ed. by Matthias Schwartz, Nina Weller, and Heike Winkel, Berlin: de Gruyter (2021), pp. 1–20.

"Serb Art Blossoms Under Bombs", in: *truthinmedia.org*, Special Truth in Media Global Watch Bulletins on NATO's War on Serbia, http://www.truthinmedia.org/Kosovo/War/PhotoAlbum/photos-art.html (September 9, 2010).

Tilly, Jacques: "Über das extremistische Weltbild der Rechtspopulisten von AfD bis Trump", in: *Humanistischer Pressedienst*, https://hpd.de/artikel/ueber-extremistische-weltbild-rechtspopulisten-afd-trump-14009 (January 23, 2017).

Üngör, Uğur Ümit and Kjell Anderson: "From Perpetrators to Perpetration: Definitions, Typologies, and Processes", in: *The Routledge International Handbook of Perpetrator Studies*, ed. by Susanne C. Knittel and Zachary J. Goldberg, London: Routledge (2020), pp. 7–22.

Valentino, Benjamin A.: *Final Solutions: Mass Killings and Genocide in the 20th Century*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (2004).

Wiederwald, Rupert: "Vogelschiss in der Geschichte: Der AfD-Partei- und Fraktionsvorsitzende Alexander Gauland verharmlost in einer Rede die Herrschaft der Nationalsozialisten. Politiker anderer Parteien sind empört", in: *Deutsche Welle*, https://www.dw.com/de/gauland-bezeichnet-ns-zeit-als-vogelschiss-in-der-geschichte/a-44054219 (June 2, 2018).

IDA WELLS'S PRINT ACTIVISM

"Activism", in: *Oxford English Dictionary*, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/activism_n.

Angenot, Marc: *La Parole Pamphlétaire: typologie des discours modernes*, Paris: Payot (1982).

Bailyn, Bernard: *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (2017 [1967]).

Boltanski, Luc: *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*, Cambridge: Polity Press (2011).

Dahn, Eurie: *Jim Crow Networks: African American Periodical Cultures*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press (2021).

Davis, Simone W.: "The 'Weak Race' and the Winchester: Political Voices in the Pamphlets of Ida B. Wells-Barnett", in: *Legacy* 12/2 (1995), pp. 77–97.

Gates, Henry Louis: "Editor's Introduction: Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes", in: *Critical Inquiry* 12/1 (1985), Special Issue: "Race," Writing, and Difference, pp. 1–20.

Goldsby, Jacqueline: *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2006).

Habermas, Jürgen: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into A Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger, Cambridge: Polity Press (1989 [1962]).

Kahn, Robert A.: "The First Amendment Encyclopedia", in: https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment / article / 1105 / cross-burning (2023).

Karschay, Stephan: *Degeneration, Normativity, and the Gothic at the Fin de Siècle*, Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan (2015).

Leypoldt, Günter: "'Sacred Calling' in Nineteenth-Century Authorship: Wordsworth, Emerson, Thackeray", in: *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* 67/3–4 (2021), pp. 599–637.

Lyon, Janet: *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press (1999).

McHenry, Elizabeth: "'Dreaded Eloquence': The Origins and Rise of African American Literary Societies and Libraries", in: *Harvard Library Bulletin* 6/2 (1995), pp. 32–56.

McHenry, Elizabeth: *To Make Negro Literature: Writing, Literary Practice, and African American Authorship*, Durham: Duke University Press (2021).

McKay, Brett and Kate McKay: "America's First Popular Men's Magazine: The National Police Gazette", in: *The Art of Manliness*, www.artofmanliness.com / character / knowledge-of-men / americas-first-popular-mens-magazine-the-national-police-gazette (April 30, 2013).

Newman, Peter, Patrick Rael, and Philip Lapsansky: "Introduction: The Theme of Our Contemplation", in: *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African-American Protest Literature, 1790–1860*, ed. by Peter Newman, Patrick Rael, and Philip Lapsansky, New York: Routledge (2001), pp. 1–31.

Seltzer, Mark: "Serial Killers (II): The Pathological Public Sphere", in: *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1995), pp. 122–149.

Warner, Michael: *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York: Zone Books (2002).

Warner, Michael: *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1990).

Wells, Ida B.: "A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States [1895]", in: idem: *The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader*, ed. by Mia Bay, New York: Penguin (2014), pp. 220–312.

Wells, Ida B.: *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, ed. by Alfreda M. Duster, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2020 [1970]).

Wells, Ida B.: "Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases [1892]", in: idem: *The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader*, ed. by Mia Bay, New York: Penguin (2014), pp. 57–82.

Wells, Ida B., Frederick Douglass, Irvine Garland Penn, and Ferdinand L. Barnett: *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not Included in the World's Columbian Exposition*, ed. by Robert W. Rydell, Urbana: University of Illinois Press (1999).

Wester, Maisha L.: *African American Gothic: Screams from Shadowed Places*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2012).

Zamalin, Alex: *Struggle on Their Minds: The Political Thought of African American Resistance*, New York: Columbia University Press (2017).

GAGA META-MANIFESTOS

Adorno, Theodor W.: *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. by Edmund F.N. Jephcott, London: Verso (2005 [1951]).

Ahmed, Sara: *Living a Feminist Life*, Durham: Duke University Press (2017).

Boltanski, Luc and Ève Chiapello: *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Verso (2005 [1999]).

Caws, Mary Ann: *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press

(2001).

D'Addario, Daniel: "Lady Gaga's Oscar Performance Could Redefine Her Career", in: *Time*, https://time.com/3718883/oscars-2015-lady-gaga-performance/ (February 23, 2015).

GagaMediaArchives: "Lady Gaga's Welcome to Chromatica Spotify Playlist Manifestos", in: *Youtube.com*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hx9oQBSHcLs (May 30, 2020).

Halberstam, Jack: "Charming for the Revolution: A Gaga Manifesto", in: *e-flux* 44, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/44/60142/charming-for-the-revolution-a-gaga-manifesto/ (April 2013).

Halberstam, Jack: *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal*, Boston: Beacon Press (2012).

Hanna, Julian: *The Manifesto Handbook: 95 Theses on an Incendiary Form*, Ridgefield, CT: Zero Books (2019).

Jensen, Jacob: "Repurposing Mises: Murray Rothbard and the Birth of Anarchocapitalism", in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 83/2 (2022), pp. 315–332.

Junker, Carsten: "Innovation and Iteration: Queer Machines and the Tension between Manifesto and Manifestor", in: *Queer Reflections on AI: Uncertain Intelligences*, ed. by Michael Klipphahn-Karge, Ann-Kathrin Koster, and Sara Morais Santos Bruss, London: Routledge (2023), pp. 145–61.

Junker, Carsten and Marie-Luise Löffler: "Ghostwriting and Its Contradictions, Or: Meet the Trumps", in: *Spaces of Dissension: Towards a New Perspective on Contradiction*, ed. by Julia Lossau, Daniel Schmidt-Brücken, and Ingo H. Warnke, Wiesbaden: Springer (2019), pp. 39–66.

Junker, Carsten and Ingo Warnke: "Marguerite Stix and the Shell: Notes on Disciplinarity and Contradiction", in: *Quaderna* 3, https://quaderna.org/3/marguerite-stix-and-the-shell-notes-on-disciplinarity-and-contradiction/ (2015).

Kaplan, Alice Yaeger: "Recent Theoretical Work with Pamphlets and Manifestoes", in: *L'Esprit Créateur* 23/4 (1983), pp. 74–82.

Lababidi, Yahia: "Never Forget, Never Remember", in: *Small Blows against Encroaching Totalitarianism: Volume One*, ed. by Daniel Levin Becker, San Fransisco: McSweeney's Books (2018), pp. 65–68.

"Lady Gaga – The Manifesto of Mother Monster", in: *genius.com*, https://genius.com/Lady-gaga-the-manifesto-of-mother-monster-lyrics (February 27, 2011).

Lauper, Cyndi: "The 2010 TIME 100", in: *Time.com*, https://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1984685_1984940_1984943,00.html (2010).

Lyon, Janet: *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*, Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press (1999).

Meier, Alex: "Lady Gaga Helps Liza Minnelli Present Best Picture at 2022 Oscars, Whispers 'I Got You'", in: *abc7*, https://abc7.com/lady-gaga-liza-minnelli-2022-oscars-and/11687601/ (March 28, 2022).

Myers, Owen: "Lady Gaga: Born This Way the Tenth Anniversary", in: *pitchfork.com*, https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/lady-gaga-born-this-way-the-tenth-anniversary/ (July 2, 2021).

Puchner, Martin: "Introduction", in: *The Manifesto in Literature – Volume 1: Origins of the Form, Pre-1900*, ed. by Thomas Riggs, Detroit: St. James Press (2013).

Riggs, Thomas (ed.): *The Manifesto in Literature – Volume 2: The Modernist Movement: 1900–WWII*, Detroit: St. James Press (2013).

Tompkins, Jane P.: *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860*, New York: Oxford University Press (1986).

WeightWatchers: "Oprah's 2020 Vision Tour Visionaries: Lady Gaga Interview", in: *Youtube.com*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8iNYY7YV04 (January 9, 2020).

Yanoshevsky, Galia: "Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre", in: *Poetics Today* 30/2 (June 1, 2009), pp. 257–286.

PICTURE CREDITS

POSTURES

1 *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763), title page, München: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, J.can.p. 1106 w, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10547162-5. Online: https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb10547162?page=6,7. © BSB Munich.
2 *Projet de l'impôt patriotique, donné par Mad. de Gouges, dans le mois de sept.re 1788*, [Paris] ([1789]), Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, collection Hennin, 10181, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40257593r. © Bibliothèque nationale de France.

CIRCULATIONS

1 "Vote Leave", in: *The UK and the European Union: The Facts* (2016), LSE Digital Library, https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uklse-dl1er010020010028-uklse-dl1-er01-002-001-0028-0001-pdf.
2 Leave.EU: "It's Time to Leave!" (2016), LSE Digital Library, https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uklse-dl1er010020010061-uklse-dl1-er01-002-001-0061-0001-pdf.
3 Better Off Out: "Is Britain Getting Too Crowded?" (2016), LSE Digital Library, https://lse-atom.arkivum.net/uklse-dl1er010020010152-uklse-dl1-er01-002-001-0152-0001-pdf.
4 @epkaufm, https://twitter.com/epkaufm/status/869474176641511424/photo/1 (20 May 2017); @ByDonkeys, https://twitter.com/ByDonkeys/status/1103728300403363843/photo/1 (7 March 2019).

PRETTY PAMPHLETS

1 Unknown, *Wha wants me* (26 December 1792), Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Online: https://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3j00005/.
2 Robert Seymour, *The March of Intellect* (ca. 1828), London: British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum

REPRODUCING FREDERICK DOUGLASS

1 Unknown, *Frederick Douglass* (ca. 1877), Washington, D.C.: Brady-Handy photograph collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. Online: https://loc.gov/item/2017895330/.
2 Unknown, *Howard Univ., Washington, D.C., ca. 1900 – Law library* (ca. 1900), Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Online: https://loc.gov/pictures/collection/anedub/item/2001705791/.
3 Frances Benjamin Johnston, *African American Schoolgirls in Classroom, Learning to Sew* (ca. 1899), Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.
4 Unknown, *Hon. Fred. Douglass on platform in [the] Pavilion* (26 March 1892), Washington, D.C.: Booker T. Washington Collection, Library of Congress. Online: https://loc.gov/item/98500648/.

BORN-TRANSLATED MANIFESTO

1 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*, adapted by Martin Rowson [Graphic Novel], London: SelfMadeHero (2018), pp. 13–14. Reproduced by permission of selfmadehero. Artwork © Martin Rowson.
2 Stefanie Kremmel, *Der Lebenslauf der Übersetzung. Die Transkulturalität des Kommunistischen Manifests*, Vienna: University of Vienna (2022), p. 325. © Stefanie Kremmel.
3 [Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels:] *The Communist Manifesto*, published by the International Workingmen's Association, New York: Schaerr & Frantz (1883), pp. 30, p.3–4. Reproduction by Biblioteca Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, Milan.

MATERIAL FOR AGITATION

1 *Gegen Young-Plan, Massenelend und Faschismus: Für ein freies, sozialistisches Deutschland (Richtlinien für den Wahlkampf 1930)* (= Instruktionen für die Wahlarbeit), Heft 1, Zentralkomitee der KPD: Berlin (1930), frontmatter.

2 *Rote Fahne* (1 May 1920), Berlin: Zeitungsinformationssystem, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, p. 2. Online: https://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/list/title/zdb/24352111/.

MASS VIOLENCE IN PAMPHLETS

1 2014 propaganda poster urging Crimeans to vote in the Crimean status referendum. Source: Andrew Lubimov, AP images.
2 Eugène Atget, *Rue de la Montagne – Sainte Geneviève*, Paris (n.d.). Source: ImageZeno.org, ID-no. 20001850032, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=64881668.
3 Unknown, propaganda poster (1944), Digital Center, Institute for Contemporary History Belgrade.
4 Unknown, Serbian anti-NATO poster, https://www.reddit.com/r/Hasan_Piker/comments/17slihf/nato_serbian_antinato_poster_1990s/.
5 Juliane Prade-Weiss, Mural in front of bombarded Serbian state TV headquarters, Belgrade (15 August 2021). © Juliane Prade-Weiss.
6 Juliane Prade-Weiss, Monument commemorating the death of employees during a 1999 NATO air raid (15 August 2021). © Juliane Prade-Weiss.
7 Unknown, *Querdenker* protesting anti-COVID-19 policies. © picture alliance / SULUPRESS.

IDA WELLS'S PRINT ACTIVISM

1 Miss Ida B. Wells: *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law In All Its Phases*, New York: The New York Age Print (1892), cover, in: Ida B. Wells, *The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader*, ed. by Mia Bay, New York: Penguin (2014), p. 57.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Nora Fuhrmeister and Sophia Liebhäuser for their editorial work on the manuscript, as well as Corinne Hundleby for proofreading the essays included in this volume. We thank our anonymous peer reviewers for their constructive criticism and Renate Krakowczyk for her tireless support at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. We thank Niki Rhyner, Max Stadler, and Ines Barner at intercomverlag for their work while preparing this volume.

AUTHORS

Pierre-Héli Monot is a literary historian and a Professor at the Amerika-Institut of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany. Since 2020, he has been the Principal Investigator of the European Research Council project "The Arts of Autonomy: Pamphleteering, Popular Philology, and the Public Sphere: 1988–2018."

David Bebnowski is a historian and a Postdoc at the Amerika-Institut of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany. Since 2021, he is part of the European Research Council project "The Arts of Autonomy: Pamphleteering, Popular Philology, and the Public Sphere: 1988–2018."

Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier is a historian and PhD candidate at the Amerika-Institut of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany. Since 2020, she is part of the European Research Council project "The Arts of Autonomy: Pamphleteering, Popular Philology, and the Public Sphere: 1988–2018."

Carsten Junker is a Professor at the Institute of English and American Studies at the TUD Dresden University of Technology, Germany. His research interests in theories and histories of authorship, genre, and media extend to the genre of the manifesto; since 2022, he has headed the research project "The Upsurge of the Manifesto in Contemporary Debates on Diversity in the United States," funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Laura Handl is a project member of the DFG-funded research project "The Upsurge of the Manifesto in Contemporary Debates on Diversity in the United States" at the Institute of English and American Studies at the TUD Dresden University of Technology, Germany.

Christoph Streb was trained as a cultural historian at Heidelberg and the EHESS and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Institut historique allemand in Paris. His first monograph, *Radical Writers and the Media Revolution in the Late Enlightenment*, will be published in 2024.

Stefanie Kremmel is an independent researcher in Vienna. She completed her PhD on the translation history of the Communist Manifesto: *Der Lebenslauf der Übersetzung. Die transkulturelle Übersetzungsgeschichte des Kommunistischen Manifests* at the University of Vienna in 2023.

Nils C. Kumkar is a sociologist at the SOCIUM, the Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy of the University of Bremen, Germany. Since 2024, he is the coordinator of the research project "Connecting the Dots: Reconstructing the Social Production of Suspicious Knowledge" (Weave Lead Agency) and principal investigator of its Bremen sub-project (https://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/522282012?language=en).

Dustin Breitenwischer is Juniorprofessor of American Studies at Universität Hamburg, Germany. He is the principal investigator of the interdisciplinary research network "Cultures of Aesthetic Resistance," funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Florian Sedlmeier is currently a Visiting Professor of American Studies at Ruhr University Bochum. Covering American literature from the long nineteenth century to the present, he is interested in concepts of authorship, the interplay of genres and publication media, and the relation of paratexts and intertexts.

Daphne Weber wrote her dissertation as a research assistant at the DFG Research Training Group "History of Literature and Knowledge of Small Forms" at the Humboldt University of Berlin and submitted it in 2024 with the title *Politics of Slogan: Tools of mobilization in the field of tension between strategy and spontaneity*.

Vladimir Petrovic is a Research Professor at Institute for Contemporary History in Belgrade and a director of its Innovation Center. He also works at NIOD, the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam.

Juliane Prade-Weiss is a Professor of Comparative Literature at LMU Munich. Her research and teaching focuses on the cultural memory of political and mass violence in Central and Eastern European literatures, particularly complicity, on the transgenerational transmission of trauma, and normalizations of justifications perpetrators present for committing violence.

MONO

Mono is a paperback series with an eye on original and creative scholarship in the history of science/knowledge/technology, science and technology studies (STS), political economy, environmental and labour history, media studies, and adjacent fields.

The underlying hybrid publication platform was developed in collaboration with gta Verlag, Zürich. It consistently interleaves online publishing (open access) and the printed book – conceptually, infrastructurally, and in terms of graphic design.

Series concept
Moritz Gleich, Niki Rhyner, Max Stadler

Series editors
Ines Barner, Nils Güttler, Niki Rhyner, Max Stadler

Graphic concept and design
Reinhard Schmidt, Nadine Wüthrich

Development
Urs Hofer

Image editing
Jolanda Suter

www.intercomverlag.ch
info@intercomverlag.ch

IMPRINT

Mono 02
Pierre-Héli Monot, David Bebnowski, Sakina Shakil Gröppmaier, eds.
Activist Writing: History, Politics, Rhetoric

Cover image
Robert Seymour, *The March of Intellect* (ca. 1828), London: British Museum.
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Proofreading
Corinne Hundleby

Project coordination (intercom Verlag)
Ines Barner, Niki Rhyner, Max Stadler

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 852205). This publication reflects only the author's view, and the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Open access
intercom-mono.com/02
DOI:10.5281/zenodo.10953093
CC BY-NC-ND

First Printing
Printed in Germany
ISBN 978-3-907380-03-1
ISSN 2813-0111
© Texts: the author(s)
© 2024 intercom Verlag, Zürich

Historically, the printed word is arguably the single most important infrastructure for activist politics. The essays gathered in this volume explore crucial examples of activist writing in sociological, historical, and literary-theoretical perspective. Together, they show that manifestos, pamphlets, open letters, and polemical speeches have left a significant imprint on the political fabric of Modernity. As a political practice, pamphleteering has continually remoulded available forms of democratic participation, thus fundamentally shaping contemporary concepts of activism.

978-3-907380-03-1
intercom-mono.com

